



Saint Michael Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement:

Excellence • Enrichment • Enjoyment

Date policy accepted by the Governing Body: July 2014

Updated: July 2017

Date for review: July 2018

Principles

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at St. Michael's School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

Responsibilities

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should familiarise themselves with this Attendance Policy and should work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance.

The school will encourage and value high attendance rates. The school will recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the Education Welfare Service and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with pupils and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

Registration

Registers provide the daily record of attendance for each pupil and may be required in a court of law, for example, as evidence where fixed penalty notices have been issued. They also contribute to a pupil's end of year report.

All registers are regularly reviewed by the Education Welfare Officer. Daily and weekly attendance figures are completed by the School Office and analysed by the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis. Running totals of authorised and unauthorised absence are maintained by the School Office and reported to parents when they fall below a certain level or raise a possible concern.

It is crucial that registers are kept updated, on Health & Safety / Safeguarding grounds. If there is a fire, staff need to account for all pupils present in the school.

Registration will be carried out at 9.00 am and at 1.20 pm. Registers will be marked promptly at these times and will be closed at 9.15 a.m. and 1.35 pm respectively. If a pupil arrives after the start of registration but before the registers have closed he/she will be marked as late for that session. If a pupil arrives after the registers have closed, he/she will be marked 'Late after Registration' (U Code), which counts as an unauthorised absence. Registers should be marked in accordance with the guidelines attached to the front of each register – new teachers are trained by the Attendance Co-ordinator, who is responsible for the registers.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised – where the school approves of the absence
- Unauthorised – where the school will not approve the absence

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. If an explanation for an absence is not received or if the explanation is deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised (absence will not be authorised for such reasons as shopping, daytrips and birthdays).

Parents are advised to contact the school by 9.00am on the first day of any absence. A written note, e-mail, phone call or other communication will be recorded by reception and placed in the relevant class register. On returning to school the pupil should bring a written note and hand this to his/her teacher. Any letters referring to absences should be kept in the back of the register. If a pupil is absent for three days with no explanation, the teacher notifies the SENDCo/Attendance Co-ordinator who will ring the parent/guardian.

Lateness

Pupils who arrive at school after morning or afternoon registration should be registered at the front desk. Admin staff, responsible for attendance, check the 'Late Book' on a daily basis and amend the register as appropriate. Pupils who arrive at school should not be admitted to class until they are entered in the late book. This is important for health and safety reasons. Pupils who leave school during the day to attend appointments and return to school, are put into the 'in-out' book.

Some cases of lateness, including persistent lateness without good reason, will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Term-Time Holidays

As a school we know that a pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching, after their return. This can result in a consequent risk of underachievement.

St Michael Catholic Primary School adheres to the attendance policy guidelines outlined by the Local Authority. This guidance clearly states that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a family holiday.

In exceptional circumstances, planned periods of absence can be granted by the Headteacher; however this must be requested in writing with a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice, by a parent with whom the pupil resides for the absence to be authorised. Once the request has been considered, written acknowledgement will be provided. The LA policy states that where unauthorised absence exceeds 20 days' the child's name can be removed from the school roll and parents will have to reapply to the Admissions Authority for a school place.

If a parent takes an unauthorised holiday, teachers will not be expected to provide work for the pupils.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued:

1. A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.
2. Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
3. Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
4. Late arrival after the close of registration on 5 occasions during a half term where the pupil's attendance falls below 85%. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with this policy.
5. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents should:

- Let the school know by 9.00am why their child is absent.
- Try to make appointments outside of the school day wherever possible.
- Not book holidays during term time

Teachers should:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration;

- Carry out registration in the prescribed manner;
- Inform SENDCO who telephones parents;
- If there are already attendance concerns the class teacher informs the SENDCO who telephones parents on the first day of any absence;
- Send out the standard proforma letters when patterns of absenteeism/lateness are detected;
- Alert the Headteacher when there is a problem which has not been solved by the above procedures;
- Arrange a meeting with parents and the pupil and class teacher to discuss attendance and/or punctuality issues, setting and monitoring targets as appropriate;
- Offer praise to individual pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality improves.

The SENDCO and Attendance Administrator should:

- Ensure the parents of any absent child provide a reason for absence by 10.15am
- monitor attendance on a regular basis, setting targets for improvement as appropriate (especially if attendance falls below 85%);
- monitor the performance of individual classes, following up with individual teacher's instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed;
- review registers and attendance and punctuality figures on a weekly basis;
- regularly put attendance onto the agenda of staff meetings;
- ensure that contact is made with parents of poor attenders, supporting the class teacher where appropriate in dealing with parents directly;
- meet with the Education Welfare Officer on a regular basis in order to discuss pupils who have not responded to the school's strategies and when necessary to make referrals;
- follow up internal truancy with appropriate punishments;
- promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies, commendations, rewards, etc.

Communication

The St. Michael's School Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- The Home-School Agreement;
- Guidance and advice in the staff handbook.
- School Website