



Saint Michael Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement:

Excellence • Enrichment • Enjoyment

Date policy accepted by the Governing Body: September 2024

Updated: September 2026

Date for review: July 2027

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 & Nursery 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 Inclusion 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 Local Authority's Inclusion Officer. Daily and weekly attendance figures are completed by the Attendance Officer at the school and analysed by the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis. Running totals of authorised and unauthorised absence are maintained by the Attendance Officer 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 must be completed 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 Officer, 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 note, e-mail (absent@st-michaels.surrey.sch.uk) , phone call or other communication will be recorded by the school office and placed on the electronic register. Any notes/appointments are kept with absent email. If a pupil is absent with no explanation, the teacher notifies the Attendance Officer who will ring the parent/guardian.

Lateness

Pupils who arrive at school after morning or afternoon registration should be registered at the school office. 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 Leave of Absence

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 & Nursery 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.

Penalty Notices

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

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. 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 and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. 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. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. 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 leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

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 the Attendance Officer who telephones parents;
- If there are already attendance concerns the class teacher informs the Attendance Officer 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 on CPOMS as appropriate;
- Offer praise to individual pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality improves.

The Attendance Officer 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 90%);
- 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 Inclusion 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.

When a child is absent from school with no explanation provided, the following process will be observed:

- Phone call to contacts in the same household with voicemails left as appropriate with clear expectation of response time
- Priority email to contacts in the same household with clear expectation of response time
- Escalation by the Attendance Officer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Repeat of the first steps by the Designated Safeguarding Lead with clear expectation of response time
- Due discussion and consideration of children's individual circumstances will be made before contacting the Surrey Inclusion Team, making a home visit, Children's Social Services or the Police as appropriate

Communication

The St Michael Catholic Primary School & Nursery School Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

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