

In God's love we believe and achieve



St. Michael's

Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Attendance policy

The aim of our school is to create a happy, secure and stimulating learning environment in which all members of the school community can grow in self-esteem and develop their potential, learning together to achieve high standards.

Mission Statement

"St Michael's School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which provides every opportunity for all pupils to reach their full potential" We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 schools are required to: (www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation)

- Keep administration and attendance registers (reg 4)
- Prescribe particulars that must be contained in the registers (5&6)
- Prescribe when leave of absence may be granted (for maintained and special schools) (7)
- Specify grounds on which a pupil's name must be deleted from the admission register (8)
- Provide for dual registration for pupils with no fixed abode (9)
- Make provision for the inspection of (10), obtaining extracts from (11), method of making entries in (13) and preserving (14) the registers and the use of computers (15)
- Specify circumstances for returns of the contents of the register to be made to the LA (12)

At St. Michael's we use attendance initiatives such as reward charts to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality and to identify vulnerable groups, feeding back progress of the attendance initiatives to the school Governing Body.

Governors are required to ensure the school keeps an attendance register, which records, in the admission register, the names of pupils on the first day they are expected to attend (not, as previously, when they first attend. The school must keep admissions and attendance registers, in which pupils should be

marked present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Aims of the attendance policy

- To make attendance a key focus for the whole school
- To reduce absence rates.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.

Parental responsibility

Parents of children aged 5 - 16 must make sure they receive a full time education. They must make sure they attend regularly and are there all day.

Under section 7 of the 1996 Education act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age received an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special needs a child might have.

If a child is absent parents must:

- Contact St Michael's by 9.30am every day of your child's absence.
- Update the school if the absence is extended
- Send in a note or a medical certificate
- Try to make any medical appointments or check-ups during the school holidays or after the school day.
- Always think "Is it essential for my child to be off school?"

Reasons for absence

Reasons for absence may be given verbally by Parent/ Carer or by written communication. The decision to authorise this lies with the school.

The following are unacceptable reasons for absence from school:

- Getting up late
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Not having uniform ready
- Looking after younger siblings
- Needing to buy new school shoes
- Being unaware of the school calendar
- Holidays in term time

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian, on the first day of absence, requesting reason for absence (whether written or verbal).

Where there have been concerns regarding attendance, written reasons/medical evidence may be required.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence or a copy of the medical appointment. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor. The school will then attempt to contact the parent/carer straight away, in order to check on the safety of the child. The school will attempt to contact the Parent/Carer on a daily basis. If we have had no contact and there are concerns about a child's whereabouts and subsequent safety a welfare visit will be carried out by the Pastoral /Safeguarding Team.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are occasional exceptional circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents to complete the appropriate leave of absence request form, from the school office 20 days in advance.

Schools are now advised by the Department of Education, NOT to authorise any leave of absence in school term time, unless the Headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. Each request will be considered independently and the Headteacher will make the final decision.

New Department of Education Guidance -August 2024

The Department of Education introduced changes to the 'Working together to improve school attendance' document, which became statutory in August 2024. The guidance outlines the responsibilities and expectations of schools (including governing bodies) and local authorities in relation to school attendance as well as reminding parents of their responsibilities.

The expectations of parents are below:

- That you will ensure that your child attends school regularly (as defined by the Supreme Court in 2017 as every day the school is open except

when a statutory reason applies) and that you notify the school as soon as possible when your child has to be unexpectedly absent .

- That you only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and that you do so in advance (it is the Headteacher's decision on what is deemed 'exceptional' as the priority is for your child to attend school every day but generally, the DfE does not consider a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.
- Where possible you book medical appointments around the school day, but when this cannot be avoided and your child has an appointment at school time, you notify the school in advance (and if your child attends the appointment in uniform, they can return to school afterwards).
- That you work with your child's school and the Local Authority to help with the understanding of any barriers to your child attending school regularly. (Please contact your school's attendance team in the first instance, who will be happy to help and offer any advice or support with barriers you may be facing.)
- That you engage with the support offered, such as through our Family Hubs or attending meetings to prevent the need for more formal support

In addition to outlining the expectations on parents, schools and local authorities, the Department for Education has also made changes to penalty notices: the cost of each penalty notice will increase for any offences committed after 19th August to £160 (£80 if paid within 21 days) for the first offence.

One of the changes introduced from 19th August is that where a parent takes the child out of school and commits a second offence within a rolling three-year period, the penalty notice amount will automatically be set at £160 (with no reduction for early payment). For any third offence in the rolling three-year period there will be no penalty notice, but there will be a prosecution.

Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child.

These changes do not take away the possibility of the Local Authority going straight to prosecution for a second offence where a penalty notice has been issued previously and not paid, resulting in a prosecution. Halton Local Authority will continue to work closely with school leaders, families and support services across the borough to ensure that every child has the best opportunity to achieve their potential.

The Local Authority can issue penalty fines where a pupil has 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence.

Long term absence

For long term we may request medical evidence in the form of a certificate or doctors letter.

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so they can keep up with their school work.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences or three consecutive days off during one half term, the parents may be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the local education support services Education Welfare Service, who may take further action to make certain that the parents or guardians understand that they have a responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on time every day the school is open.

Lateness

Every child needs to be in school on time every day. Any child arriving after 8.50am will be marked as late. If you know your child will be late due to a medical appointment, you will need to inform us of this.

If a child has a medical appointment in the morning they will need to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa, if the appointment in the afternoon they will need to attend school in the morning and be collected again just before their appointment.

Rewards for good attendance and punctuality

There are weekly, monthly and termly incentives for all children. Trophies and certificates are awarded in assembly.

There are also certificates awarded to children who have 98 % - 100% attendance. Any children who we see a great improvement in attendance and punctuality will receive awards too. We also have Attendance focus weeks throughout the year.

Attendance targets

St Michael's school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target setting meeting. The attendance targets are challenging yet realistic and are based on the attendance figures achieved in previous years.

Monitoring and review

All absences will be reviewed on a regular basis; any patterns noticed may be referred to the appropriate support services for example, School Health or Education Welfare Services.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of 5 years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality in their classes, ensuring all absences are correctly coded. This information is then passed to the Attendance Officer - Helen Leitch who will follow up on all absences in the appropriate way. If there is longer term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who may report this to Education Welfare Services.

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed and Signed every 2 years by Mike Volynchok, Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing body.

Reviewed and signed in April 2025. Signed copy available from the school

Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes from 2024

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework	Present Mark
C	Authorised Circumstance (see next page for breakdown)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school - Attending Sheffield Inclusion Centre - Attending Alternative Provision at another school site - Chapel House / Becton Outreach / CAMHS Lodges - Hospital education - Education at a secure / residential site - Off-site direction / managed move	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority - Home Tutoring - Approved Framework for Alternative Provision - Blended Learning	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend

R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend