



## Attendance Policy 2020- 2021 St. Michael in the Hamlet Primary School

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. We aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/ carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

At St Michael in the Hamlet attendance is a key part of safeguarding our children. Our Attendance Lead is Ms Larsen, who works alongside the Safeguarding team to monitor the attendance of all our children, including those not yet compulsory school age in order to establish good attendance and punctuality routines for families.

### Absence Line

Parents should use the absence line to report the nature of their child's illness for each day of absence. Children with vomiting or diarrhoea need to have had no symptoms for 24 hours, 48 hours in the case of a school epidemic, and be noticeably well before returning to school.

**NB.** Children should only be absent from school if their illness prevents them from leaving their bed/home or would be contagious to others. Colds and sore throats are not a valid reason for absence.

### Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

### Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- 'exceptional' circumstances (determined by LA for consideration by school)

### Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable. Absence should not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;



- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (eg shopping, minding the house, etc);
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

### Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

### Approved Educational

Activity Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

### Registers

By law attendance registers are taken twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Parents/carers must ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.55 am and again at 12.55 pm. The morning register closes at 9.30 so pupils arriving between 8.55 and 9.30 will be marked with an L indicating they are late for school. However, pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be registered with a U showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a (half-)termly and yearly basis;
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to termtime holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc); match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers/carers.

### First Day Response

As a vigilant and caring school we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a telephone call.

### Punctuality

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In addressing punctuality St Michael in the Hamlet school has clear procedures and communicate these to parents/carers. We use positive encouragement such as certificates for classes. The office staff Team follow up the reasons for lateness and are alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

**It is the responsibility of the Head teacher and the Attendance Lead to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The Governing Body set attendance targets annually and are kept informed on attendance figures.**

### Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance in writing to the Head Teacher and can only be authorised where School accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation penalty notices will be issued where the trigger of 5 days is met.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013).

### Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/ carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60. In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of 5 school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or 10 school days lost to unauthorised absence in 2 consecutive terms before a Penalty Notice is considered. In cases of unauthorised absence parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of Penalty Notice being issued. This will state the extent of the child's absences and give parents/carers 15 days to bring about an improvement. In that time the child should have no unauthorised absences from school.

In cases of unauthorised holidays warnings will be issued where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given. This means that in some cases, Penalty Notices may be issued without a warning.

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## Absence for religious reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

**Reviewed:** October 2020

**Review date:** October 2021

