

## St Michael's CE Aided Primary School

### School Attendance Policy

As a school we are committed to ensuring that each and every child has full access to learning and teaching - in our Aims we state that "all our children have the right to equal access and participation in all aspects of school life - intellectual, creative, physical and social - regardless of their race, gender, disability, ability, religion, national or social origin".

We sincerely believe that all of our children benefit from the teaching and opportunities that we provide, and therefore from regular attendance at school. In order to achieve this we will take action to ensure that all our children achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

We acknowledge that the vast majority of our children want to come to school to learn, to socialise with their friends, and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's attendance at school (1996 Education Act, Section 7).

#### **As a school we expect that**

##### **all our children will:**

- Attend school every day
- Arrive and be ready to start the day on time
- Complete any work given during an authorised period of absence

##### **parents/carers will:**

- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure that their child attends school regularly
- Contact the school by telephone, as soon as is practicable, whenever their child is too ill to attend school
- Inform their child's teacher or the Headteacher of any reason/problem that may hinder the child from attending school
- Endeavour to keep medical and dental appointments out of school hours whenever possible. When this is not possible, children should be brought back in to school at the soonest opportunity.

- Request permission from school for any leave of absence. The Headteacher has the right to refuse authorised absence in accordance with LA and DfE guidelines.

**Parents/carers and children can expect that the school will:**

- Keep regular, efficient and accurate records of attendance
- Contact parents/carers when a child is absent without an explanation
- Take action on any attendance problem
- Refer specific attendance issues to the supporting agencies e.g. the Attendance and Engagement Team
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**We encourage regular attendance by:**

- Having clear and consistent communication with parents/carers and children about the importance of regular and prompt attendance
- Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with Governors, parents/carers and children
- Ensuring that the registers are completed at the start of each session i.e. 8.50am and 1pm (KS1) 1:10 (KS2)
- Talking with the children about the importance of their being in school
- Celebrating excellent attendance each term, and also 100% attendance at the end of the school year

**A child's absence from school can normally only be authorised if the child:**

- is ill
- is observing a religious festival
- is participating in an educational activity off site, e.g. writers workshops, transition day
- is taking part in a residential visit organised by the school

**An absence will be considered un-authorised/illegal if the child is, for example:**

- going shopping (even to buy shoes)
- looking after younger children
- sleeping in
- taking a day off for their birthday
- going to the airport to greet or say goodbye to a relative

- attending extra-curricular events during school hours
- undertaking any work during school hours, whether paid or not
- staying at home because the parent/carer is unwell (parents/carers are expected to make alternative arrangements to bring their child to school)

**As a school we will respond to non-attendance by:**

- Contacting parents by telephone on the first day of absence if no reason has been received
- If there is no response to this first contact then a letter will be sent to the parents/carers
- Where a pattern of non-attendance may be emerging we will ask parents/carers to come into school and discuss the situation with us
- If a child's attendance falls below 85% we may not authorise the absence and may refer the case to the Attendance and Engagement Team

**Requests for a absence during term time**

**The law states that parents/carers do not have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.**

However, we acknowledge that from time to time some parents/carers will want to take their child out of school for holidays. For the most part we anticipate that these will be when one or other parent/carer is contractually unable to take their holiday during school holidays eg those who work in the travel industry or technicians who service equipment when labs/offices are closed during the summer months.

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) did allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

At no time will a request for absence in term time be authorised for a child in Years 2 and 6 during May, or for any child in the first four weeks of the academic year.

All requests for an absence in term time must be on the school's absence form available from the office. Forms should be handed in at least 14 school days prior to the first date of the absence. Absences that are taken without prior (14 day) permission will be treated as an unauthorised absence. Retrospective permission will not be given.

### **Requests for extended absence from school**

On occasions requests may be received for an extended period of absence. It is expected that these occasions should be exceptional and that the necessity for, and the timing and length of such absence will require careful consideration by both school and families. There is an expectation that parents would need to make a very strong case to take their child out of school for a significant period of time. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:

- A trip to participate in a significant family event with extended family who live abroad and the nature of the trip justifies an extended period of absence from school.

It is noted by the school that there are positive benefits for children both educationally and culturally to visit extended family living abroad. We would want to build on these experiences and would provide the children with a package of work for the period of time that they are away from school. There is an expectation that this work will be completed and given to the teacher for assessment.

If parents fail to ensure that the child returns to school on the agreed date, then the extra time will be considered as an unauthorised absence. If a child fails to return to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date, and no mitigating circumstances such as illness have been offered, it is possible that the child's name may be removed from the school roll and the place offered to a child on the LA's waiting list.

The school follows LA and National guidelines when absence is requested during term time.

## **Re-integration following a prolonged period of absence**

Following an extended period of absence it is important that children are given the opportunity to re-integrate themselves back into the school properly.

There are a number of reasons why a child may have been absent for a long period of time - illness, extended authorised absence, or prolonged non-attendance. Where necessary we will seek to work with the children, parents/carers, the Attendance and Engagement Team and other support agencies to devise a supportive plan to aid the process of re-integration.

This plan may include some of the following:

- A planned and staged re-admission
- Providing a mentor, for a limited time, to help the child overcome any re-integration problems
- Provision of additional work to help the child catch up
- Ensuring that all staff are supportive and encouraging to the child's return
- Regular reviews of progress

## **The Cherwell Partnership of Schools**

St Michael's has worked together with all the other schools in the Cherwell Partnership to draft a joint statement on 'Attendance.' This statement mirrors the content of this policy and includes the following graph which emphasises the importance of school attendance. (A copy of the statement can be collected from the school office)

# EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Days off school add up to lost learning

<b>175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR</b>		175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs, and other appointments.			
<b>190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</b>  190 days for your child's education	10 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence Half a term missed	38 days absence	47 days absence
	<b>180 DAYS OF EDUCATION</b>  5% Absence				
<b>100% Attendance</b>	<b>95% Attendance</b>	<b>90% Attendance</b>	<b>85% Attendance</b>	<b>80% Attendance</b>	<b>75% Attendance</b>
<b>GOOD</b>  Best chance of success.  Gets your child off to a flying start.		<b>WORRYING</b>  Less chance of success.  Makes it harder to progress.		<b>SERIOUS CONCERN</b>  Not fair on your child  Court Action!	

PLEASE DON'T LET YOUR CHILD MISS OUT ON THE  
EDUCATION THEY DESERVE.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS!

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee on behalf of the Governing Body.

	Staff	Personnel Committee	Governing Body
Policy approved by	20.6.05	13.6.05	30.11.05
Policy reviewed by	15.06.09	08.10.09	06.10.09
	April 2013	21.05.13	14.05.13
	20.01.14		31.01.14