



Attendance Policy

This Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Community and Safeguarding Committee or, in the event of a change in legislation, earlier.

Updated September 2022

Signed

Head Teacher: Rosalind Owen

Chair of Governors: 

Date Adopted: 12 October 2022

Introduction

Children need to attend school regularly and punctually to gain the maximum benefit from their education. Absence from lessons leaves children very vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less well at school. They miss out on the wide range of opportunities school provides to learn and develop academically, socially and emotionally. At St Michael's C of E Primary School, we work with parents to ensure that children access the education they are entitled to and aim for all children to be in school for at least 96% of the school year.

- The school year is 190 (six and a half hour) days, this leaves 175 days and many hours when children are not expected to be in school and can spend time on family, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs, and other appointments
- **Persistent absence** is defined as 10% (19 days) absence from school - for any reason (see Appendix A). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. We recognise that persistent absence can often be a symptom of wider issues in a child's life and we aim to work closely with a child's family to help support improved attendance.
- **Severe absence (SA)** is when a child misses 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to a child's academic and social progress and can have lifelong consequences. All SA children at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. Parents will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 95+%.

Where a child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern, we aim to discuss this with parents at the earliest opportunity.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the mandatory requirements laid out in the Department for Education's [Working together to improve school attendance](#), which applies from September 2022.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Attendance Register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register and all children must be placed on this register. At St Michael's the register is taken twice a day – at 8:50 in the morning and at the start of the afternoon session, 1:00pm in Key Stage1 and 1:15 in Key Stage 2. The register records

Attendance Policy Sept 2022 – based on OCC Model Policy July 2022, DfE Working together to improve school attendance May 2022

whether a child is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Morning Procedure

In the morning the school day starts promptly at 8:50, with registration, when all children should be in class. (This is also when children make their lunch choices.) The gates to the school playground will be open by 8:30 and children can enter their classrooms from 8:40. The playground gates will be closed by 9:00 to give parents time to leave the site safely. Any children who arrive after 8:50 must register as late at the school office.

Lateness and punctuality

A child who arrives late but before the register has closed (9:20am) will be marked as late in the register. A child who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent. By this time the child will have missed a substantial part of the first lesson of the day. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the school day, they miss information about the day ahead as well as important teaching time. Late arriving children disrupt lessons and impact on other children's learning, as classroom adults have to help them catch up. It can also be embarrassing for the child. School is happy to speak with parents to find solutions to persistent lateness.

Reporting Absence

Parents must notify the school office on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible.

The office can be contacted by:

- phone: 01865 241476 (messages can be left if there is no one answering the phone)
- email: office.3216@st-michaels-oxf.oxon.sch.uk
- in the event of illness, parents can use [Studybugs](#) – link available on the school website

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. In most cases the office will contact families by 9:30am on the day of absence to find out the reasons for a child's absence.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences are indicated by different codes on the register (see: [Working together to improve school attendance](#)). Where a child is marked as absent on the register, the code used will indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the reason for the absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Leave of absence granted by the school in exceptional circumstances at the head teacher's discretion
- A child in employment for the purpose of taking part in a performance
- A child subject to a temporary part-time timetable
- A child who is excluded but no alternative provision is made
- Illness - absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, we will request medical evidence to support the absence
- Medical/dental appointments - parents are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The school office must be informed in advance of any medical or dental appointment
- Religious observance – interpreted as a day when the child's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt we will seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance
- Traveller children travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and the school has granted a leave of absence following a request from the parent. To help ensure continuity of education for children, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes, it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere and be dual registered at that school and their main school.

Unauthorised absence is where a child's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in regulation 6(2) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 or where the reason for a child's absence has not been provided and cannot be established. This includes absence:

- because of a holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
- where a reason has not yet been provided
- because a child arrived in school after registration closed (9:20am)

Other examples of situations that will be considered unauthorised absence:

- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- days off for shopping or birthdays
- day trips in term time which have not been agreed

- looking after other children
- going to the airport to greet or say goodbye to a relative
- attending extra-curricular events during school hours
- staying at home because the parent is unwell (parents are expected to make alternative arrangements to bring their child to school)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents should never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Requests for exceptional term-time absence

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.

Head teachers are only able to authorise absence from school in **exceptional circumstances**. In making a request for an authorised absence from school, parents will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If a child is taken out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised. Each application is considered individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

All requests for absence in term time must be made on the school's absence form (Appendix B), available from the office and on the website. Forms should be handed in at least **14 days** prior to the first date of the absence.

Absences that are taken without prior permission will be treated as an unauthorised absence. Retrospective permission will not be given.

Reporting to parents

Parents will be informed about their child's attendance record as part of the end of year written report. This will indicate the number of school sessions the child has attended and their percentage unauthorised absence.

Attendance Monitoring

Attendance is monitored on a half termly basis and reported to the Governors (The Governors' Community and Safeguarding Committee has oversight of attendance). Where there are concerns about an individual child's attendance, their attendance will be monitored on daily or weekly basis, as appropriate. Attendance data is also provided to the Local Authority and the Department for Education who publish school level absence information alongside national statistics.

If school has significant concerns about a child's attendance and efforts to work with the child's parents have not led to an improvement, we will seek support from Oxfordshire County Council's Attendance Team.

We recognise that absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing and we will always work together with the family and other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where this is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects children's right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

Attendance Rewards

Children who attend school regularly and punctually generally make good progress academically, socially and emotionally. Success in school is a reward in itself.

Children who achieve 100% attendance over an academic year are recognised in our end of year celebration assembly.

Staff Responsibilities

All school staff are committed to working with parents and children to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Staff with particular responsibility for attendance are:

- Judith Davies – Administration Manager
- Emma Martin – Deputy Head
- Rosalind Owen – Head Teacher

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Days off school add up to lost learning

<p>175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR</p>		<p>175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs, and other appointments.</p>			
		<p>PERSISTENT ABSENCE</p>			
<p>190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</p> <p>190 days for your child's education</p>	<p>10 days absence</p> <p>180 DAYS OF EDUCATION</p> <p>5% Absence</p>	<p>19 days absence</p> <p>171 DAYS OF EDUCATION</p> <p>10% (PERSISTENT) Absence</p>	<p>29 days absence Half a term missed</p> <p>161 DAYS OF EDUCATION</p> <p>15% Absence</p>	<p>38 days absence</p> <p>152 DAYS OF EDUCATION</p> <p>20% Absence</p>	<p>47 days absence</p> <p>143 DAYS OF EDUCATION</p> <p>25% Absence</p>
	<p>100% Attendance</p> <p>GOOD</p> <p>Best chance of success.</p>	<p>95% Attendance</p> <p>2 weeks lost learning</p>	<p>INCREASINGLY WORRYING</p> <p>Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress.</p>		<p>SERIOUS CONCERN</p> <p>Not fair on your child Progress is likely to be limited.</p>
<p>100% Attendance</p>	<p>95% Attendance</p>	<p>90% Attendance</p>	<p>85% Attendance</p>	<p>80% Attendance</p>	<p>75% Attendance</p>

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

Appendix B



Love Determination Responsibility Respect Kindness Friendship Honesty

St Michael's C of E Aided Primary School

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in **exceptional circumstances**. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. **Please note:** There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised.

You are advised not to make any travel arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A - To the Head Teacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

to be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from _____ to _____ (inclusive dates).

Please provide more information about this request in Section C, overleaf.

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence please enter their name and school below:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Section B - for school use only

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for ____ number of days from the dates and times _____

Please arrange to speak to Mrs Owen to discuss this application further.

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

Head Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Current attendance rate: _____

Section C - Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the circumstances which make your application exceptional and therefore why the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please attach another page.

Section D - I am the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent\carer): _____ Date: _____

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the head teacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a child except where an application has been made **in advance** and the head teacher considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application. Each application is considered individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. 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 absence in term time must be made on the school's absence form available from the office. Forms should be handed in at least **14 days** prior to the first date of the absence. Absences that are taken without prior permission will be treated as an unauthorised absence. Retrospective permission will not be given. Schools are required to report unauthorised absences to the Department for Education and the Oxfordshire County Council.