

At St Michael's we strive to develop and inspire **courageous, respectful** and resilient learners encouraging them **serve** with **kindness, respect** and tolerance guided by our Christian values so that they can flourish, living 'life in all its fullness'. (John 10:10)

Introduction

St Michael's First School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational and spiritual opportunities available to them.

The whole school community - pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors - have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of this policy. In addition, the Governing Body values diversity and is committed to ensuring that no individuals are discriminated against on any grounds, including the protected characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010.

School's roles and responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at St Michael's First School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

3. Parent and Carer Responsibilities

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if their child cannot attend and give the reason
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- Communicate any barriers to good attendance to the school at the earliest convenience

- Do not book holidays in term time - this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Seek advice from their G.P. if they are not sure how long to keep their child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all up to date contact details.

Attendance Leader

Our Office manager (referred to as Attendance Leader in this policy) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared monthly with the Headteacher, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body termly.

She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage so that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Registration

Upon entry to the school children's details are formally added to the school register. The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. St Michael's First School uses electronic registration. Teachers or an authorised member of support staff will mark the electronic register with a 'present' code or 'N' - see codes below. Staff in the office will check all 'N' codes and replace them if necessary before uploading to the pupil database. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (See Appendix 1)

Attendance registers are kept for 3 years and the Local Authority is informed should school plan to remove any pupil from its register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;

- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education :

If St Michael's receives written notification from parents that you wish to home educate your child then we will inform the Local Authority electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst St Michael's will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will we seek to encourage you to do this - particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Definition of persistent absence :

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period.

School Specific Procedures related to :

Reporting Absence

It is a parent/carers responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. The normal expectation is that a parent would telephone by 9:30am on the first day of absence. Where a child is ill, school should be notified of the nature of the illness and, when this can be predicted, the expected date of return to school. This is part of child welfare, to inform a school that carers know the whereabouts of the child. Failing that, the school endeavours to contact parents/guardians to ensure that the absent child is safe and to enquire why they are absent.

If contact with parents cannot be made within three days by the school regarding an unexpected absence then a home visit will be attempted.

The Local Authority will be informed if there is an unexplained absence of longer than two weeks or children display irregular patterns of attendance causing concern.

Lateness

Parents who bring their children to school after registration has closed (8:50am) will be asked to sign the Late Book and the child will be marked with an L code. Parents should be aware that our register closes at 9am. Any child arriving after this time without prior consent will be marked as a 'U' code in the register. This is classed as an unauthorised absence and will affect your child's overall percentage of attendance mark. This will also lead to penalty notice proceedings if a child were to incur 10 marks over a 12 week period.

Reporting to Governors regarding school attendance data, policy and procedures

The headteacher reports attendance data to governors termly as part of the headteacher report to governors.

Involving other agencies

The Local Authority will be informed of the absence of any without school's permission and school may involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child but presents a cause for concern.

**Absence during normal school hours
(Medical appointments and checkups)**

We encourage families to arrange medical appointments and checkups out of school hours or during school breaks. However, if a child is taken out of school during normal school hours then the following procedures must be adhered to.

- The parent informs the school prior to the day if they intend to take their child out of school during normal hours.
- The parent informs the school of the time of collection.
- The parent reports to the school office and fills in the "In / Out" book or record on SIMS- detailing which child has been collected, by whom, reason for leave, time of collection, date and the adult's signature.
- The child is then collected from class by a member of staff.
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On returning to school during normal hours a return time is entered into the "IN / Out" book or SIMS updated. Copies of appointments may be requested

If a child is registered and then collected from school they retain their attendance mark. If a child attends an early appointment but returns to school after the register is closed during the morning session then they are marked as absent but must be entered in the In/Out book or on SIMS. The same applies for the afternoon session. The "In / Out" book/ SIMS accounts for any in discrepancies in registers during a fire drill or alarm.

Special Occasions/Family Holidays

Amendments to the 2006 Education (pupil Registration)(England) regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not. Much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. A leave of absence form will need to be completed.

In considering individual cases the Headteacher will take into account the nature of the event, its frequency, whether advance notice was given and the overall attendance pattern of the child. The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Penalty Notices for leave of absence (holiday) during term time and persistent absence

The Governing Body has adopted the Stafford LA Guidelines in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015 for Penalty Notices where a child has taken any due to holiday or a combination of u codes and holiday.

- [Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed penalty notices](#)
- [Department for Education Guidance -Pupil Attendance including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers](#)

Information Sharing

St Michael's will at all times follow policies for data protection, safeguarding and complaints procedures if an alternative external agency is used by the school to support pupil attendance

Monitoring and analysis of attendance data takes place by the Business manager and headteacher and the Education welfare worker to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for all pupils including vulnerable group.

This policy was adopted by the Governing body on: 18.3.2021 and is due for review in March 2024

Signed: _____ (Chair of Governors)

Appendix 1: [Attendance codes](#)**Appendix 2: Request for leave****Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time**

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Request for leave during term time

To: The head teacher of:..... (School) Date.....

I request a leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name)
.....

for the period from (date) to (date)

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -

.....
.....
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s))School(s) attended
.....
.....

(Signature of 1st parent/carer(s) Print Name.....

(Signature of 2nd parent/carer(s) Print Name.....

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time(this academic year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request :

SignedHead teacher . Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carer.....