



Attendance Policy September 2023-24

In our inclusive and caring church school community our actions are mirrors of our Christian values.

We strive to instil a love of learning through empowering all with the knowledge and skills that encourage them to be independent life-long learners; widening horizons and providing opportunities for all irrespective of their different starting points.

We have pride in who we are and excitement about who we can be.

This policy has been reviewed in response to the Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Leadership and Management

Head Teacher: Sarah Addison

Senior Leadership Designated Attendance Champion: Emily Wood (DHT)

Governor Attendance Champion: TBC

All teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents.

We regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.

It is the intent for all pupils at St Michael's C of E Primary school to achieve attendance of 96% as a minimum expectation for all children - this will be clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

All staff may challenge those parents and pupils who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Senior Leaders will work with other agencies and professional bodies as appropriate to support parents, including (but not restricted to) Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologists, Children's Services, Pupil Reintegration Team, Attend Framework, Lincolnshire Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pathway.

Relationships and Communication

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. It is the intent of St Michael's C of E Primary School to build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.

St Michael's C of E Primary School treats all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue

prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.

Systems and Data

The law requires all schools including independent schools to have an admission register and, except for schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the admission register and have their attendance recorded in the attendance register and will be kept in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

Schools must also take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

St Michael's C of E Primary School Registration Information:

Morning registration **opens at 8:55.**

The school gates open at **8:45am and are closed at 9.00am**. A child arriving after the gates close will be marked as late into school (attendance code L, please see appendix A), and we expect parents or carers to bring the children in at the main office after this point, giving reasons for lateness.

Morning registration **closes at 9.10am**, any children arriving after this time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence - late code (attendance code U).

Afternoon registration for EYFS and KS1 is at 12:45pm.

Afternoon registration for KS2 is at 1:15pm.

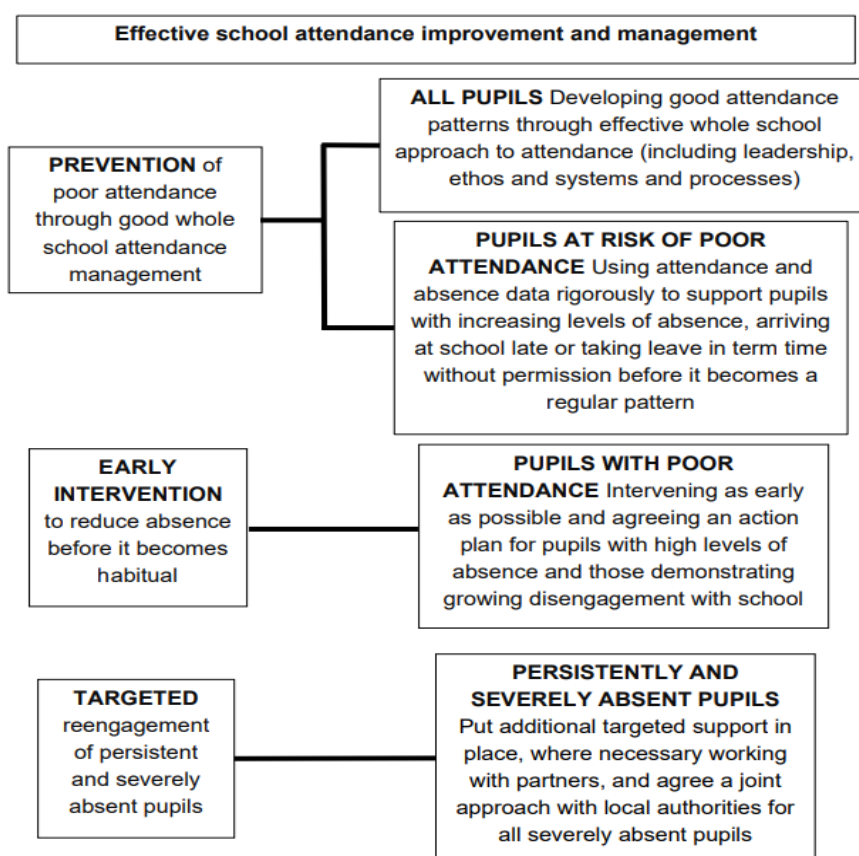
St Michael's C of E Primary School will use the national codes (see Appendix A) to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

Intervention

School Attendance - boundaries and description	
Bounday	Description
95-100%	As expected
91-94%	At risk of persistent absence
80-90%	Persistent absence
51-79%	At risk of severe absence
<=50%	Severe absence

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset.

Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent. St Michael's C of E Primary School will follow the suggested effective school attendance improvement and management pathway below:



INTENT

St Michael's C of E Primary:

- a) Seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for achieving their potential;
- b) Aims for attendance to be 96% as a minimum expectation for all children.
- c) Strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, so that each member of our community feels safe and valued;
- d) Requires staff to work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends regularly and punctually;
- e) Will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate external agencies to provide information, advice and support. Support offered to families may include informal work with our Deputy Head Teacher, Family Support Worker or a Pastoral Support Worker, or more formally via an Early Help Assessment (EHA), or a Team Around the Child meeting (TAC).
- f) Will challenge those parents and pupils who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- g) Will work with other agencies and professional bodies as appropriate to support parents, including (but not restricted to) Education Welfare Officers, Children's Services, Pupil Reintegration Team, Lincolnshire Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pathway.

Expectations:

- a) Securing a high level of attendance requires **Parents/Carers** to work closely with the school. It is essential parents/carers:
 - Ensure their child arrives on time for school; **gates open at 8:45am.**
 - Notify the school before 9.05am on the first day that their child is absent and every following day of absence, including an estimation of the likely length of absence wherever possible.
 - Contact the school at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attendance.
 - Recognise that the school will be concerned when any child fails to meet the attendance target and work with us to improve their child's attendance.
- b) If parents request leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, this request must be made well in advance on the form available from the office. Parents can request a meeting as well. Further information regarding requests for absence can be found under the heading 'Unauthorised and Authorised Absence' below.

IMPLEMENTATION:

School Organisation

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Governors:

- Governor(s) may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Governors can play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- Analyse regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings (6 times per year).

Head Teacher & Attendance Champion:

- Oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- Regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- Set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- Monitor pupil attendance <90% on a weekly basis and all pupils' attendance on a half termly basis.
- Respond to concerns raised by staff.
- Initiate phone calls to parents and arrange School Attendance Panel meetings.
- Ensure staff are kept up to date with the latest DFE Attendance guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Class Teacher to:

- Complete registers accurately (indicating all authorised/unauthorised absence) and on time. Registers are then to be saved by 9:05am (AM session) and within 10 minutes of the start of the PM session to enable the office to ascertain any absences.
- Challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence and inform the SMT Attendance Lead /Head teacher/DSL immediately of any serious concerns.
- Keep all evidence of absence on the register system and pass any written evidence/messages to the office to be filed in the child's personal file.

Administration Staff to:

- Input attendance data onto the Integris system using the correct codes as recommended by the DFE in their publication '*School Attendance*'. www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance

- Produce updates from weekly registers and weekly percentage information for the HT/SLT/Pastoral Lead.
- Keep all evidence of absence on the register system and written evidence to be filed in the child's personal file.
- Follow up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents/carers. Staff to ring or text if the pupil has not arrived by 9.15am, after the register has been completed.
- Challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence and inform the SMT/Head teacher/DSL immediately of any serious concerns.
- Inform the SLT if there is no response to attempted contact.
- Send letters out to request that reasons for absence are provided.
- Send out letters to parents / carers at the request of the Head Teacher.

Unexplained Absence

a) First Day of Absence

If the School has not been notified about a reason for non-attendance, we will contact parents via text as soon as possible. If the Parents/Carers do not respond to the text message, then all contacts on the child's record will be contacted by telephone if necessary and messages will be left. The Management Information System will be completed.

b) Consecutive Days of Absence

If the school has not been notified about a reason for an absence for a second day, school will continue to attempt to contact all those named on the child's contact list. If we are unable to ascertain a reason for the absence, school will request a welfare check.

c) Tenth Day of Unexplained Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority through the ***Children Missing in Education*** reporting process. We will also continue to liaise with the School's appointed Education Welfare Officer and Pastoral Leader.

Unauthorised and Authorised Absence

Unauthorised Absence - This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes Children at Risk of Missing Education and new pupils who have not arrived in school on the agreed admission date. These pupils are pursued through the School's procedures.

Authorised Absence - This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. An authorised absence requires communication from the parent/carer. Any pupil whose parent does not provide a reason for absence will be deemed to have been absent without a proven reason and the absence recorded as unauthorised. Absences are only allowed for specific reasons. These reasons include your child being ill, having an unavoidable medical or dental appointment, taking part in a religious event or requiring absence due to exceptional circumstances.

- Pupils Not Attending Regularly (PNAR) will be reported to the Local Authority on the 10th day of consecutive absence.

Holidays

Family holidays during term time cannot be authorised.

- Each request for absence is considered separately. As the Head Teacher is required to consider each request as unique, any individual decision cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the School in the past, and nor does it set a precedent.
- Any request for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be received well in advance using a relevant absence form which can be obtained from the school office.
- Once you have completed the Request for Absence form, it will be passed to the Head Teacher for consideration. You will be notified in writing via email/text if the request has been authorised or not within 5 working days of the request.
- **The Governing Body has decided that the decision of the Head Teacher is final.** Parents can make a complaint to the Governing Body, if they feel their request has not been dealt with fairly. Parents should request a copy of the Complaints Policy for more information.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) & Medical

When attendance is compromised because of EBSA, or indeed any medical issue, then there is a statutory duty for both school and Local Authority to deliver education.

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act, 2014 places a duty on schools to make arrangements for all pupils with medical conditions in terms of both physical and mental health. Whilst section 19 of the Education Act (1996) requires local authority to arrange suitable (so far as health allows) full-time (if suitable) education for children who would otherwise not receive education because of their illness.

St Michael's C of E Primary School follows the Lincolnshire EBSA pathway to support pupils identified as such: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/support-education/emotional-based-school-avoidance-ebsa/2>

Reduced/Flexible Time Table

A reduced timetable may be in place as part of a wider plan of support, and will only be implemented with agreement from parents or carers and any other supporting professionals, e.g. Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council SEND Team, Virtual School etc.

A flexible timetable may be in place as part of a wider plan of support for children below statutory school age of 5 years. This will only be implemented with agreement from parents or carers and any other supporting professionals, eg Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council SEND Team, Virtual School.

Use of Data

a) The efficient and speedy collection of data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. At St Michael's School we use attendance data to monitor:

- Individual absence and lateness.
- Patterns of lateness and absence and the identification of trends by: Year groups, seasonal patterns, patterns and nature of unauthorised absence.
- Vulnerable groups e.g. SEND, EAL, and Disadvantaged Pupils.

All staff members need to be alert to changes in attendance patterns and raise any concerns with the Head Teacher or Attendance Champion.

Procedure for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices

a) Lincolnshire County Council is responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in Lincolnshire. The Local Authority will ensure that penalty notices are properly issued and will only issue them for offences where the Local Authority is satisfied that the matter meets the threshold for a prosecution.

Further information including copies of the code of conduct can be found on Lincolnshire County Council's website, <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare>

When requesting a FPN it is important to include the details of those parents/carers who have day-to-day care of the child (meaning those who reside with the child). Equally it is important that warning letters go separately to each parent, this is so that if the case does go to prosecution we can clearly evidence that both parents have been clearly informed (templates of these letters are available from the Inclusion & Attendance Team).

b) The use of Fixed Penalty Notices:

- Regulations allow both the Local Authority and schools to issue fixed penalty notices. Payment is always made to the Local Authority.
- Fixed penalties are only one of the tools available to the Local Authority in tackling school attendance and anti-social behaviour issues and, where thought appropriate, alternative approaches such as Education Supervision Orders and prosecution may be utilised at the discretion of the Local Authority.
- If a penalty notice is issued, whether paid or not, it may be used in evidence in subsequent criminal proceedings in relation to either non-school attendance or being in a public place during school hours whilst excluded from school.

c) Fixed term penalties will only be issued in circumstances where the Local Authority is satisfied that the criteria for prosecution would be met if the option of a fixed penalty notice is not taken up by the parent. The circumstances in which a notice may be issued are:

- Where a child is absent from school due to unauthorised absence of 15% or above over a six-week period.
- Where a child is present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of any exclusion.

d) There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice and a parent can either accept and pay the same or decline payment subject to them being aware that further action as set out below may be taken by the Local Authority if the penalty notice remains unpaid.

However, the Local Authority has the discretion to withdraw the notice if they are satisfied that:

- The fixed penalty notice has been sent to the wrong person.
- It contains a material error (in these circumstances a fresh amended penalty notice could still be issued).
- If for any other reason the Local Authority are of the opinion that it should not have been issued.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

The 1996 Education Act (section 7) places a legal responsibility upon parents or carers to ensure that their child receives an appropriate, full time and effective education (suitable to their educational needs).

The first step in the process of electing to home educate your child is to discuss this with school. If after this discussion, you still want to home educate your child you must write or email the Head Teacher, stating your intentions to withdraw your child from the school roll in order to home educate them.

The school will then inform the Local Authority Elective Home Education Team.

If your child has never been to school or you have moved to Lincolnshire, contact ehe@lincolnshire.gov.uk or call 01522 782030.

More information about this can be found: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-attendance/home-education>

Attendance Champion

We understand that most children will have days when they're not able to go to school, whether that is due to illness or a family emergency, and the occasional day off is unlikely to affect their education.

However, missing too much school can be seriously detrimental to learning and social interactions. The school attendance champion will be the main point of contact regarding attendance, and is required to monitor all attendance.

If you wish to discuss attendance/lateness please contact the school **Attendance Champion Mrs E Wood:**

01507 603867

Emily.Wood@st-michaels.lincs.sch.uk

Appendix A - Attendance and Absence Codes

Below are the most used codes to mark attendance, but for a full list of codes visit P55 of Working Together to Improve Attendance 2022 (DfE):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm 204. Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed.

Code U: A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that is more appropriate.

Code O: Absent without authorisation.

Code C: Leave of absence granted by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence. Wherever referred to in this guidance a leave of absence should not be, and from certain types of school must not be, granted unless it has been applied for in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the headteacher believes the circumstances to be exceptional.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools must record absences as authorised where pupils cannot attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern.

Code M: Medical or Dental Appointment.

Code R: Religious Observance

