



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Last review date: July 2023**

**Latest review date: July 2024**

**Staff responsible: Henry Marshall (Head) and Florence Clayton (Assistant Head Pastoral and DSL)**

**Chair of Governors: Mark Taylor**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following St Michael's policies:

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Missing Child Policy*
- *Supervision Policy*

### **Rights Respecting School policy statement**

Our school's vision and values have at their heart the importance of treating each other as we would want to be treated ourselves, with Care, Consideration and Courtesy for all. This is one of the reasons the work of UNICEF and Rights Respecting Schools is so significant to us. We are committed to respecting, upholding and promoting the rights of every child. This policy links specifically to our commitment to the the following articles:

- *Article 3 - Best interest of the child*
- *Article 28 - Access to Education*
- *Article 29 - Aims of Education*

### **Introduction**

This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS. At St Michael's Preparatory School, we see pupil attendance as critical to academic success and social integration. It is also a critical element of our safeguarding procedures. We ask parents to familiarise themselves with this policy, and to help us to promote the standards of attendance and punctuality which are essential for an orderly school environment, where all pupils can get the maximum benefit from their education.

Absence, whatever its cause, is detrimental to any pupil's academic, social and emotional development. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less. Regular or persistent absence can also indicate a pupil welfare issue. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. Parents can only allow their child to miss school if they are too ill to go in or they have advance permission from the school. The Educational Welfare Officer may be informed of any pupil who fails to attend regularly, or has or has been absent without the school's permission or awareness for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The Children and Family Hub will also be informed if absence amounts to a safeguarding concern.



In order to maximise our pupils' potential, St Michael's is committed to ensuring pupils do not miss out on their education through poor attendance rates. Form tutors and class teachers are expected to monitor and review the attendance record for the pupils for whom they are responsible and raise any concerns with the Assistant Head Pastoral or Deputy Head in case of concern. Poor attendance, as well as noticeable patterns, or sudden unexplained absence must be followed up by the school. Pupil absences at the start of the school year present a skewed proportion, so their seriousness will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Attendance and Registration**

An electronic register is taken to monitor attendance both in the morning and afternoon. The registration codes are as follows:

*Present*

*Absent (Approved - Educational Activity)*

*Absent (Authorised)*

*Absent (Unauthorised)*

*Precautionary (C-19)*

*Late arrival (Authorised)*

*Late arrival (Unauthorised)*

*Leaving Early*

*Leaving Early (Regular)*

*Medical Appointment*

### **Key contacts**

St Michael's Preparatory School will telephone parents should there be unexplained absence of which the school has not been notified. For day-to-day attendance matters, please contact your child's form tutor.

### **Leave of Absence**

Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Head and may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Parents should submit their request to the Head. If an absence is authorised in advance parents will be notified and an absence note will not be required on return.

### **Action on school absence**

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school concerning the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence and to provide such further information as may be required. If the school is not notified of a pupil's absence a call will be made to parents. The school will remain in contact with parents on a regular basis until the pupil returns. Parents are informed if absences are recorded as unauthorised.

If a pupil is arriving late or leaving early, it is crucial that a parent brings the pupil to the school Office to sign them in or out. Please do not collect or return children directly from the class but report to the school Office first.



## **Reasons for absence**

### Illness

Parents are requested to inform the form tutor on the first day if their child is ill and subsequent days following this. Illness will be authorised, but if a child's illness is significantly impacting their attendance record, a discussion with parents (and pupil if appropriate) may be had to see how we can best support the family moving forward.

### Medical and Dental Appointments

Routine visits to the dentist, optician etc., should be arranged during school holidays or out of school hours where possible.

### Bereavement

It is helpful if we are informed of family bereavement so that we can offer pupils the support they need. Absence under such circumstances will be marked on the school register as 'Authorised'.

### Religious Observance

Absence can be authorised on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a pupil's parents belong.

### Special Occasions

Exceptional occasions may be sanctioned through authorised absence, requested in writing to the Head. Such events might include a sibling's graduation or family wedding. Attending sports events or concerts are not sufficient cause for authorisation.

### Senior School Visits

Senior Schools visits will be authorised under 'Absent (Approved - Educational Activity)'. Parents should request authorisation for the absence in advance.

### Interviews

Pupils must, of course, attend interviews at Senior Schools at the times and on the dates allocated by the institutions. It is essential that they keep the school informed of these dates. Again, this will be authorised under 'Absent (Approved - Educational Activity)'.

### Sport fixtures for out of school teams

Sports fixtures which take place away from the school premises (to represent the school, Island, Channel Islands, County or International) will be marked as 'Absent (Approved - Educational Activity)'.

### Holiday

Time off for family holidays will not be supported by the school. It is not permitted to take pupils out of school for holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and there has been prior authorisation by the Head. Any requests for your child to be taken out of school during term time should be made in advance. Please contact the Head at least two weeks in advance of the requested absence. These will be considered on a case by case basis but leave will only be granted if circumstances are exceptional or in the case of extenuating circumstances such as when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis. The number of days authorised will be at the Head's discretion. Absences due to holiday will be marked as 'Unauthorised' on the school register.



### **Persistent or severe absence**

Where absence or a pattern of absence appears to be at risk of becoming problematic, the form tutor will initially make contact with parents to discuss our concerns regarding attendance and to help remove barriers to attendance where possible. If absence persists, we will invite parents in to meet with the Assistant Head Pastoral or Headteacher so that an attendance plan can be discussed. These actions will be regularly reviewed, and stepped up if there is no improvement to the situation. Where a whole family response is appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary Early Help assessment. Ultimately if voluntary support is not effective the school will work with the EWO to put more formal measures in place. Persistent or severe absence is always treated as a safeguarding risk.

### **Pupils with individual needs**

Whilst good attendance is an expectation for all pupils at the school, we recognise that this may be more of a challenge for some pupils including those with special educational needs or disabilities, or those suffering from long term medical conditions or mental health difficulties. The school will allow for these circumstances when working with such pupils and their parents, and will develop individualised support approaches that meet their specific needs where appropriate.

### **Returning to school**

Sometimes a pupil who has been absent for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances the school will work with the pupil and parents to support reintegration.

### **Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to be punctual at all times. It is expected that all pupils arrive into their form rooms by 08.40. If a pupil is late for registration, they must sign in at the School Office as soon as they arrive. If they fail to do this, the school will assume they are absent. Lateness without reasonable cause will be deemed to be unauthorised absence. Lateness will be monitored and persistent lateness will be discussed with parents.

We also ask to ensure that pupils are picked up on time at the end of their school day. If a pupil is not picked up on time, they will be escorted to the Boardroom and we ask parents to please collect them from there. Persistent late pick up will be discussed with parents.

### **Children Missing Education**

Please see our Missing Child Policy for more information.

### **Nursery**

Although our Nursery children are not of compulsory school age, we strongly encourage parents to communicate with us if their child is going to be absent. We always follow-up unexplained absences as part of our Safeguarding procedure.