

# **St. Michael's C.E. (VC) First School**

## **Attendance Policy**



## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following: -

- How the school encourages good attendance
- How the school monitors attendance
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Holiday absence in term time
- Role of the Education Welfare Worker (EWW)

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is a government legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days. It is also a government requirement that we monitor attendance and apply the legal requirement.

It is our policy that no child's attendance should fall below an acceptable level as we recognise that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil achievement.

We expect all children on roll to attend school every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

This policy is written with the above statements in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in our establishment of the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality;
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every child has access to a full time education which they are entitled to;
- Ensure that pupils succeed and realise their full potential whilst at school;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

Our Registers will:

- Record which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day.
- Indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

- Record the reasons for a pupils absence
- Use the appropriate Staffordshire codes to mark reasons for absence
- Be regularly reviewed and attendance monitored too address any areas of concern
- Be shared with parents and EWW as appropriate to address attendance issues or concerns

### **Attendance Expectations**

#### **We expect that all children will: -**

- Attend school every day;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day (i.e. PE kit, book bag, homework etc).

#### **We expect that parents/carers will: -**

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence, before 9.15am
- Notify school in writing or via the telephone line or voicemail detailing the reason for absence and period of time on the first day of illness;
- Notify school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details.

#### **The school will: -**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality;
- Monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Encourage good attendance through meetings with parents
- Inform parents/carers of the attendance of all pupils termly (use of colour coded letters);
- Discuss with the EWW any child causing concern
- Meet with parents where a child's attendance is of concern

### **ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come:
- That the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued;
- A place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed

- A place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset parents are encouraged to take an active role in the work of the school and to share and support their children's enthusiasm. Among the variety of commitments parents agree to undertake within the Home School Agreement regular and punctual attendance is prominent.

The child's attendance record is shared with parents as part of written reports. Individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools.

#### **4. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE**

- Regular checks on attendance are carried out by the attendance officer and head teacher.
- The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon.
- Registers are checked by office administrators.
- All absences and persistent lateness are investigated.
- When the register closes the office administrators operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.
- Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information Systems
- The Head teacher and attendance officer monitor the attendance of pupils each half-term and contact parents if a child's attendance has been lower than 95% however reasons for the absences are also considered.
- The Educational Welfare Worker may be involved if a child's attendance is lower than 90%.
- Returns of school data are made annually to the Department for Education (DfE)
- The head teacher reports termly to governors on attendance data
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#### **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance and it is a statutory requirement for the school to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

The following represent the sort of absences, which the school will approve as **authorised**

- Medical/dental appointment or illness
- Approved sporting activity (playing at a standard of excellence)
- Day of religious observance
- Visits to prospective secondary schools
- Immediate family bereavement or wedding
- Adverse weather conditions

From time to time children need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical appointments. Such absences usually only take up part of a day. The school should be informed of such absences in writing in advance with accompanying documents and children should be brought in to school for morning registration and back to school straight after the appointment.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

5.5 **Unauthorised** absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/ explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

Some examples are provided below.

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Birthdays and anniversaries;
- Parents/carers unable to drop off/collect a child due to work commitments/ appointments.

## **6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

The Headteacher will not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so could result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parents, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

## **REGISTERS, PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

All children should be in the classroom ready for learning by the time school starts.

Registers close 15 minutes after the start of the school day. A child arriving after the start of the school day but within the 15 minutes before registers close will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer into school via the main entrance and sign the late book. The L code will be used, which means a child has received a late mark for that session.

Should a child arrive more than 15 minutes after the start of the school day your child will receive a U code, this equates to an unauthorised absence for that session and will affect your child's annual attendance.

If a child is absent from school and the school has not been notified of the child's absence a 'O' (unauthorised absence) mark will be awarded.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM**

8.1 Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils.

In order to try and prevent children falling below the acceptable level parents will be updated termly on their child's percentage attendance.

## **ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL WELFARE WORKER (EWW)**

On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing the Head teacher will work directly with the family to seek solutions.

Should the problem persist then a referral to the school's Education Welfare Worker (EWW) will follow. The EWW has a number of statutory powers to assist families with attendance difficulties and, of course, has access to all the support mechanisms of the County's Social Services.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our children's success.

The school greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays.

The Head teacher is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic targets and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.