



The school's Christian vision

Our five core Christian values

Trust, Honesty, Compassion, Respect and Kindness
are centred on

'Do to others as you would like them to do to you.' (Luke
6:13)



Through these values we inspire children to be the
best they can be. Encouraging high aspirations and
expectations that will allow them to achieve, explore,
succeed and prepare for their own path through life.

St Michael's CE VA Primary School

Lyme Regis

Attendance Policy

Signature of Headteacher:	<i>M. G. Dole</i>
Signature of Governing body:	<i>B. Wood</i>
Date ratified by the Governing Body:	26.09.2022
Next review date:	26.09.2023

St Michael's CE VA Primary School
Lyme Regis
Attendance Policy

Statement of Safeguarding Children

At St. Michael's CE VA Primary School, we have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils. The Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy indicates some of the processes and procedures by which children who are at risk are identified and what actions the school will take on identifying a child who is considered 'at risk'. All staff, including our volunteers and supply staff must ensure they are aware of our Procedures. Parents and carers are also encouraged to make themselves familiar with the school safeguarding policies, which can be found on our website.

When there are concerns about a child's welfare, we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies. Unless we have good reason to believe this is not in the child's best interest, we will always ensure our concerns about our pupils are discussed with their parents/ carers first.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr N Kiddle, Headteacher.

Aim

St Michael's CE VA Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. Our aim is to ensure that, wherever possible, children are at school, on time, every day that the school is open.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational potential we expect all pupils to have 100% attendance. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

At St Michael's CE VA Primary School, we are committed to engage with, meet and develop solutions to address barriers to attendance with parents but if this approach does not work a more formal approach will be taken.

Each year the school will set attendance targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Background

Attendance is defined as timely presence at sessions (each day consisting of a morning and an afternoon session) recorded in Class Registers.

The school year is 190 days (380 sessions). An absence of 10 days in any given academic year equates to 5.2% and means a pupil will not attain minimum expected attendance.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended with effect from

1 September 2013 removed all reference to family holiday, extended leave and 10 school days' absence thresholds previously published.

Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

Punctuality and Registers

Our staff will be involved in greeting and meeting children and their families in the mornings. Children who arrive late after the gate to the left-hand side of the school has closed, must go to the main entrance of the school to be signed in by the parent who has brought them to school. Only children who have permission to walk to and from school independently will be signed in by a school adult. Children may have a genuine reason; appropriate follow-ups may be required with children/parents/carers and staff.

For Langmoor and Coram classes the school gate opens at 9am. For Anning and Lister classes the school gate opens at 9.05am. The gates will close at 9.10am. The schools uses SIMS and the register input will be directly into the system. If there is a connectivity problem or barrier to electronic registration the backup system of laminated registers will be used. These are stored by the school office.

The registers will remain open until 9.20am. Children can be marked as late before registration closes. Children who are late after registration closes will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session, unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Registers are marked again at 1pm each day and all children are expected to be in attendance.

A pattern of poor punctuality will firstly be discussed with the parent and if the difficulty continues, a referral for support will be made.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

First Day Absence

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in fit condition to learn.

If a parent knows that a child will be absent for a session at school it is our expectation that the parent will contact the school before 9am on 01297 442623 or speak directly to a member of the office staff.

Registers are closed at 9.20am and checked by the responsible person in the admin team;

- From 9.20am, parent/s of children that are absent from school and a reason has not been given will be contacted by the school to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- If a child is absent and a reason has been given this will be coded as unauthorized unless this absence has been authorized and agreed by the Headteacher or is related to medical illness or needs. Where attendance is below 90% proof of medical appointment or illness may be required.
- Please note: we follow the guidance on infection controls in schools from Public Health England to advise parents on recommended periods their child should be absent from school if they are ill.
- If no contact with parent/s can be made and no reason is given the absence will be recorded as N. The school again will attempt to contact the parents/guardian of the child by phone by morning break as a way of ensuring that the child is safe.
- Parents should then contact the school daily to inform that the child is still ill if the absence is longer than one day.

Third Day of Absence

At the third day of absence if a child is still away and there has **been no contact** from the parent/s the Third Day absence letter will be sent to ask the parents to contact the school that same day to inform the school of where the child is and why they are not attending school.

Attendance issues will be raised with parents through Parents' evenings, school prospectus, Newsletters, school website, PING and a letter prior to commencing school. Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns the school has about attendance and given the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff.

Continuing Absence

At the seventh day of absence if a child is still away and there has been no contact from the parent/s the Seventh Day absence letter will be sent to ask the parents to contact the school that same day to inform the school of where the child is and why they are not attending school. This letter will state that if contact has not been made to the school within 72 hours the tenth day threshold will have been reached and the school will escalate the matter to the Local Authority and report that the child is missing in education.

Absence notes

The school requires that upon a child's return to school parents must provide a written letter, and where appropriate a medical note. This will be considered and the final decision upon whether the absence is authorized or unauthorized will be taken at this point.

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils in their absence. Parents would be encouraged to meet and discuss with the class teacher what they can do to help their child catch up with work that has been missed at home.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Government has placed a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by suitable we mean efficient full time education suitable for her/his age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs the child

may have. The duty does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly.

These children are referred to as Children Missing Education. Children are identified as missing from education when they are of compulsory school age and are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time.
- Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:
 - They do not start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the education system.
 - They are removed from school by their parents.
 - They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area.
 - The family move home regularly.

The school will contact the local authority for advice when they feel that a child may be missing in education. A formal referral will be made on the 10th day of the child not being in school to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services School Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

Frequent Absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the *Attendance Manager* to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. Different actions will be taken at different thresholds:

- **Below 95%:** *Attendance Manager* will informally contact parents and 95% letter will be sent. This will be logged;
- **Below 90%:** 90% letter will be issued and parent/s will be contacted by the *Attendance Manager* to arrange a meeting with the parent/s in school to discuss this further. The relevant Class Teacher or Deputy Headteacher may be present with the *Attendance Manager*. Absence will only be authorized with a medical note or reason accepted by the Head teacher. A review date will be set. The conditions as for Below 90% will apply. This will be logged. A clear expectation of an improvement in attendance will be set out with the consequence that if it does not then parents will be requested to attend an Attendance Panel with a Governor. Attendance will be closely monitored by the *Attendance Manager*. This meeting may result in establishing a Team Around the Family (TAF) with the family to improve attendance. If a TAF is in place then this be coded as Universal Partnership Plus. A review date will be set.
- **Attendance below 80%** is likely to be escalated to the local authority attendance team. All the arrangements above will be put in place and a TAF will be sought and external professionals or the engagement of partner agencies is likely to be sought to support the child.

The Local Authority Attendance Manager is responsible for ensuring that the local authority's duties concerning school attendance are fulfilled, particularly in relation to:

- The issuing of penalty notices,
- The application for education supervision orders, and parental prosecutions.

These duties are set out in *School attendance parental responsibility measures – Statutory Guidance January 2015*

Persistent Absence

All pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Head Teacher. The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance. The action plan will cover the points in the arrangements for attendance below 85% described above.

Medical Evidence for Persistent Absence

Where there is significant absence about minor illness e.g. coughs, colds, headaches etc...the parents should be required to provide evidence e.g. appointment cards. In these circumstances, an appointment with the school nurse may be offered who will be able to advise on recurring ailments as it is important these are addressed and pupils attend school as much as possible.

The school will happily administer medicine prescribed by a doctor to ensure that a child can attend school if they are feeling well even when needing to take medication. Doctors will be happy to prescribe pain relief if they feel that a child needs it to enable them to attend school regularly.

Children with Medical Needs - Long-term health conditions – Provision at home or hospital

Children or young people who are unable to attend school because of long term or recurring health conditions or mental health issues, should have a personal (or individual) education / learning plan. Their social needs should be taken into account and where possible links will be made with their school to facilitate continued social contact with peers.

Where absences are expected to last for more than 15 working days and involve a physical, psychological or mental health condition or other specific conditions, the school will either seek the advice of the Community Paediatrician, Hospital Consultant, CAMHS, or request the involvement of a Locality Social Worker.

The Consultant will be asked to:

- confirm the child or young person's health condition (or mental health), and advise on what action is being taken in addressing the condition;
- indicate whether the child or young person's absence is likely to last for more than 15 working days;
- comment on the child or young person's ability to cope with educational provision, and provide guidance upon the amount provision that is appropriate;
- comment on whether the illness is chronic and likely to recur necessitating future support from the Early Intervention Services Team, thus negating the need to reapply for support inside a specified timeframe;
- Indicate the treatment or support that the child or young person is to receive that will support their return to health and full time attendance at school.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

Unauthorised Absence	Authorised absence	Approved Educational Activity
This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason	This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.	This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. <i>Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.</i>

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

Leave of absence in term time

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove reference to family holidays and extended leave

as well as the statutory threshold 10 school days. The amendments make it clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. There is no right to remove a child from school for reason of holiday. An absence can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and the parent must make a case for taking a child away from school.

The regulations mean that:

- Parents cannot demand a leave of absence as an automatic right. Requests must be made in advance.
- Schools cannot apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications. All requests must be considered on their own merits.
- Extended periods of absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.
- The Headteacher, on behalf of the Governing Body, will authorise/unauthorise a leave of absence.
- Absence which has not been agreed in advance will lead to the pupil being marked with 'unauthorised absence'.
- Parents could be issued with a Penalty Notice if they take unauthorised absence in relation to taking a holiday in term time.

Dorset's Penalty Notice Protocol, If you would like to read more about this protocol go to : <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/school-attendance.aspx>

Responsibilities

Parents/ Carers

- Ensure your child arrives at school on time every day prepared for the day and ready to learn
- Inform the school promptly if your child is ill
- Do not book any leave of absence during term time
- Support the school's drive to improve the children's life chances to learn and achieve their full potential

Pupils

- Expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Children who walk themselves to school to ensure they have sufficient time to arrive on time.
- Inform parents or an adult at school of any underlying issues/ problems/ concerns that are restricting them from attending school.
- Be aware that bullying will not be tolerated, if they find they are being bullied pupil should know how to get support.
- Understand that staff at times will need to talk to parents/ carers about absences.

Class Teachers

- Ensure that registers are filled in accurately following school guidelines
- Pursue any unexplained absences with parents/ carers.
- Inform Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher and school office about any attendance concerns as soon as they arise

Office Admin

- Check registers on a daily basis
- PING message or phone parents on first day of absence, if no reason provided
- Liaise with teachers and provide letter to follow up any unexplained absences
- Ensure that late arrivals are recorded correctly
- Input data from registers into SIMS on a regular basis
- Collate attendance data at regular intervals, or by request from the Headteacher
- Complete statutory body and local authority requests for information

Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school attendance
- Contact parents to raise concerns regarding high levels of absence
- Authorise leave of absence on behalf of the Governing Body ONLY in exceptional circumstances
- Instigate attendance procedures as appropriate
- Attend Attendance Panel meetings as required
- Refer to Locality Team/Social Care if necessary
- Liaise with Inclusion Manager and other staff as appropriate
- Regularly report attendance figures to parents, Governing Body, appropriate authorities etc.
- Set challenging attendance targets in agreement with the Governing Body

Governing Body

- Monitor overall school attendance figures half-termly
- Review school policy and procedures annually
- Work with the Headteacher and school staff to improve attendance figures
- The school's policy will be ratified by the Governing Body.
- An explanation of hierarchy of actions the school takes in the event of absence, including Penalty Notices.

Data Analysis

- Data analysis plays a central role in all school and there will be procedures and systems for gathering the analysing absence data.
- Issues with any classes or year groups.
- Attendance patterns of children in care.
- Number of children with short but sporadic absences.
- Comparing data with school that siblings may attend.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child attends. St. Michael's CE VA Primary School is committed to working with parents in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. We have a collective responsibility to ensure our children are here every day.

Further guidance is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>