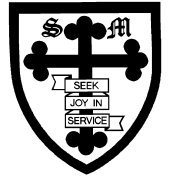


St Michael's CE Primary School Attendance Policy



At St. Michael's, we believe that every child is a valued member of our school family, and we want them to thrive in a warm, supportive environment. We are committed to working with families to ensure that all children receive their full educational entitlement. Our approach to attendance is underpinned by our values of love, respect, and integrity.

We aim to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education.
- Act early to address patterns of absence with compassion and understanding.
- Work closely with parents/carers to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality, acknowledging individual circumstances.
- Support parents in fulfilling their legal duty to ensure regular attendance.

1. **Purpose and scope**

This policy sets out St Michael's approach to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality, in line with statutory guidance. Good attendance underpins curriculum access, progress and pupils' safety and welfare. It applies to all pupils from Nursery to Year 6 and to staff, governors and parents/carers involved in promoting attendance.

2. **Legal and statutory context**

This policy is written in line with:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE) — statutory guidance (effective 19 August 2024).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.
- The Education Act 1996 and 2002, and relevant pupil registration regulations.

3. **School commitment**

We will:

- Promote a whole-school culture which expects and supports regular attendance and punctuality, rooted in our values of Love, Respect and Integrity.
- Treat attendance as a safeguarding priority: unexplained or concerning absence may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental-health need or that a child is missing education (CME). The DSL will be involved in any safeguarding-related attendance concern.
- Work compassionately with families to remove barriers and secure sustained attendance, while using statutory interventions where necessary.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- Headteacher: has final responsibility for the attendance policy and its application. The headteacher authorises leave of absence where exceptional circumstances are judged to apply.
- Senior Attendance Champion (strategic lead): Mrs Lisa Cordaro — oversees attendance strategy, meets regularly with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), monitors whole-school data and reports to SLT and governors.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): receives immediate notification of any unexplained or worrying absence and leads safeguarding actions.
- Attendance officer / school office: day-to-day management of registers, first-day calling, contacting parents and recording precise reasons for absence.
- Class teachers: complete registers accurately and promote daily attendance routines.
- Parents/carers: have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance. They must notify the school of absence by 8:00am on each day of absence and provide information and evidence where requested.

5. School day, registration and lateness

- School day start: 08:55; register taken at 09:00.
- Register closing: the register will close at 09:30 for the morning session. Pupils arriving after 09:00 but before the register closes will be coded L (late). Pupils arriving after 09:30 will be coded U (arrived after register closed) and counted as absent for that session for statistical purposes.
- Afternoon registration times will be published in the school calendar and follow the same principles for lateness.

6. Attendance codes and recording

- The school uses the DfE national attendance codes (updated 2024). Appendix A contains the full current code list and short descriptors. Notable codes include:
- C — Leave of absence granted by the school in exceptional circumstances (subcodes C1, C2 as per DfE definitions).
- K — Education provision arranged by a local authority (alternative provision).
- Q — Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements.
- N — Reason not yet established (to be corrected within 5 working days).
- All registers must be completed accurately. If a reason for absence is unknown, code N will be used and updated within 5 working days once verified.

7. Reporting absence and first-day response

- Parents/carers must notify the school by 8:00am on the first day of absence (phone or absence@st-michaels.enfield.sch.uk) and provide an expected date of return where possible.
- First-day calling: if no reason has been provided by 09:15, the school will:
 1. Phone the primary contact.
 2. If no response, call other emergency contacts.
 3. If still no response by 11:30, escalate to a senior leader and inform the DSL if safeguarding concerns exist.
 4. Where appropriate, arrange a home visit or refer to external partners.
- Where absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding and to establish next steps.

8. Leave of absence and term-time requests

- Leave of absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and is entirely at the headteacher's discretion. Routine term-time holidays will not be authorised.
- Parents must complete a Leave of Absence Request Form in advance. The headteacher will consider each request individually, record the decision and provide reasons to parents. Where leave is authorised, the school will state the number of authorised days.
- Unauthorised leave may result in penalty notices or other sanctions as set out in local authority policy.

9. Persistent and severe absence — definitions and staged response

- Persistent absence (PA): attendance below 90% (i.e., missing 10% or more of sessions).
- Severe absence: attendance below 50%.
- Monitoring and escalation (staged approach):
- Stage 1 — Early support: attendance below 95% for a rolling period or emerging pattern. School contacts family, offers support and records an Attendance Action Plan.
- Stage 2 — Targeted intervention: persistent absence (<90%) — formal meeting with parents, Attendance Action Plan with SMART targets, and involvement of the EWO where necessary.
- Stage 3 — Multi-agency response: if no improvement or where barriers require wider support, refer to LA attendance services/Early Help and coordinate multi-agency plans (consider SEND/EHCP assessment where relevant).
- Stage 4 — Severe absence and safeguarding: pupils missing 50%+ or where safeguarding concerns remain — urgent multi-agency action, possible CME procedures and referral to children's social care under KCSIE guidance.
- All interventions will be recorded and reviewed. Where families refuse support and absence remains unauthorised, statutory enforcement may be considered as a last resort.

10. Supporting vulnerable pupils and reasonable adjustments

- The policy is applied fairly, considering equality duties and individual needs (SEND, EAL, medical conditions, disability). Reasonable adjustments will be made to support access to education (e.g., phased returns, part-time timetables with clear review dates, transport support where appropriate).
- Use of part-time timetables: only used temporarily and recorded properly (use C2 or appropriate code) with clear written plans, time limits and review dates. Prolonged reduced provision will trigger consideration of alternative arrangements, SEND processes or LA support.

11. Safeguarding and attendance

- Absence can be a safeguarding indicator. The DSL will be notified immediately of any unexplained absence that causes concern. The school will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and make referrals to social care where thresholds are met.
- For pupils who are electively home educated or removed from roll, the school will follow statutory deletion and notification procedures and work with the LA.

12. Home/school reintegration and long-term absence

- For pupils returning after prolonged absence (medical, mental health, bereavement), the school will implement a reintegration plan: phased timetable where needed, curriculum catch-up, wellbeing checks and regular review meetings with parents and external professionals as appropriate.

13. Promoting and incentivising attendance

- We celebrate good and improving attendance through weekly class awards, termly recognition and targeted incentives designed to motivate without shaming.
- Attendance communications to parents will show impact in days/weeks missed and the effect on learning rather than only percentages.

14. Data, monitoring and reporting

- Attendance data will be reviewed weekly by the Senior Attendance Champion and termly by SLT and governors. The school will:
 - Identify pupils and cohorts with low attendance and deploy targeted support.
 - Submit statutory returns to the LA and DfE as required.
 - Use attendance data to inform funding and intervention decisions (e.g., pupil premium targeting).

15. Sanctions and legal measures

- Where supportive interventions fail and unauthorised absence persists, the school will work with the LA to consider statutory measures including penalty notices, Education Supervision Orders or prosecution, following local protocols.

16. Communication and accessibility

- This policy will be published on the school website and shared with parents on admission and each September (or after any update). The school will seek the views of pupils and parents when the policy is reviewed.

17. Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes. Next review: April 2027.

Appendix A — DfE Attendance Code Table

- / = Present (am)
- \ = Present (pm)
- B = Educated off site (approved alternative provision) / Attending any other approved educational activity
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school in exceptional circumstances
 - C1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (as per DfE sub-definition)
 - C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (temporary and recorded with review date)
- D = Dual registration (registered at another school)
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- F = Extended family holiday (if used locally)
- G = Holiday (not authorised by the school) — unauthorised absence
- H = Family bereavement / exceptional compassionate leave (use where appropriate and defined locally)
- I = Illness (not medical/dental appointment)
- J1 / J2 = Leave for interview/entrance (J1 = employment interview; J2 = for admission to education institution)
- K = Education provision arranged by the local authority (e.g., AP arranged by LA)
- L = Late (arrival before register closed) — present but late
- M = Medical / dental appointment (authorised)
- N = Reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 working days)
- O = Absent from school in other or unknown circumstances (use sparingly; correct asap)
- P = Participating in a sporting activity (approved)
- Q = Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements (equipment/online provision/other access issue)
- R = Religious observance (authorised; DfE allows one day unless otherwise agreed)
- S = Study leave (for public examinations)
- T = Traveller absence (where family required to travel for occupational purposes and meets conditions)
- U = Arrived after register closed (counts as absence for session)
- V = Educational visit or trip (authorised)
- W = Work experience (authorised)
- X = Non-compulsory school-age absence (e.g., nursery not required to attend)
- Y1–Y7 = Specific “unable to attend” codes for site/transport/public-health/unavoidable causes:
 - Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not available
 - Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
 - Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of school premises closed
 - Y4 = Unable to attend due to whole school site unexpectedly closed
 - Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
 - Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
 - Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil’s name added to register in advance of start date
- # = Planned whole-school closure (no session to take place)

Attendance Escalation Flowchart

1. Daily registers completed by class teacher by 09:00 (morning) and at PM registration.
 - If pupil arrives after 09:00 but before 09:30 → code L.
After 09:30 → code U and count as absent for session.
2. First-day response (Attendance officer / school office)
 - By 09:15: Check register and text/phone primary contact if no message.
 - If no reply, phone all emergency contacts.
 - By 11:30: If still no contact → escalate to Senior Leader on duty and inform DSL. Decide on home visit if necessary.
3. Recording & coding
 - Use N if reason unknown; update within 5 working days (MIS auto-reminder).
 - Use correct DfE code (C1/C2/K/Q etc.) and add brief free-text reason for audit.
4. Monitor weekly (Senior Attendance Champion — Mrs Cordaro)
 - Identify pupils <95% (early support), <90% (persistent), <50% (severe).
Produce cohort list for SLT.
5. Intervention stages
 - Early support (<95%): Attendance officer contacts family; offer support; set Attendance Action Plan if required.
 - Targeted (persistent, <90%): Formal school meeting; set SMART targets; involve EWO if agreed.
 - Multi-agency (no improvement or complex barriers): Convene multi-agency meeting; consider Early Help, CAMHS, SEND assessment.
 - Severe / safeguarding (<50% or immediate risk): DSL leads urgent safeguarding response; consider CME and refer to children's social care where thresholds met.
6. Enforcement (last resort)
 - If support refused and absence remains unauthorised.