



St Michael's and Pen Mill Nursery and Infant Academies **Attendance and Punctuality Policy** **2016 – 2017**

Values:

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

St Michael's and Pen Mill Academies expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

- Somerset Education Authorities target for attendance is 96%.
- We are continuously working towards our goal of at least 98% attendance for all pupils.

Overall Aims:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.

- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held every week on Friday. Classes with the highest attendance/punctuality receive Attendance Bear/Punctuality Cup. Each class with 98%+ will get two house points; if they have 100% attendance, they will get five points.

Weekly Bulletin:-

A SIMS graph is added to show every classes attendance.

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club operates to support parents by allowing them to drop their children off earlier, ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by members of staff.

Attendance Certificate

Children with 98% attendance, receive an attendance certificate, signed by the Head of School to take home and keep while those with 100% have a certificate signed by the Executive Head. Certificates are presented each term, to reward those who achieve excellent attendance.

Pupils who manage to attend for the whole year will be rewarded with a prize.

Parent/teacher consultation evenings

This provides an opportunity for form teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the Head of School.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMS twice daily. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

The register closes at 09.00am after which children need to report to the office. In the afternoon, the register closes at 13.05 for St Michael's and 13.20 for Pen Mill.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. (Copies of all standard letter formats are included at the end of this document.)

Punctuality

Children arriving late are expected to be signed in at the office where their time of arrival is recorded.

IMPORTANT:

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call or text will be made. The SA follows this system:

- Phone parents' contact number(s) to ascertain the reason for absence
- If the school administrator is unable to make contact with a parent, they will refer this to the Head of School/Executive Head

The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on the first day absence sheet and this is filed in the absence folder.

The SA must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If the SA has not been able to contact parents after 2 weeks then the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised).

Attendance Meetings

The SA monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 95% and where an improvement isn't seen, the parents will be invited in to talk about how the school and EWO can support them.

Extended Holidays

In line with Somerset Local Authority, 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, **leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances.** The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances

are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Executive Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Date agreed by the Governing Body: _____

Signed: (Chair of the Governing Body) _____

Policy to be reviewed in July 2016

Appendix 1

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Somerset Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Somerset Local Authority policies and procedures.

Head of school:

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

School Administrator

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the EH, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for EH/SMT/SLT to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of sims registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter, following persistent instances of lateness or absence.
- To maintain CMIS attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To support EH with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.

- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- **To complete the daily class attendance and monitor late arrivals .**
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the Sims register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's Sims system at 9.00 am and 1.15 pm at Pen Mill/1.05 pm at St Michael's
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- **To promptly inform the EH, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.**
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. **If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.** If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- **Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.**
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions, e.g. Spotlight
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection

Spotlight

This is a formal legal system, which involves fining parents for their child's poor attendance; over a specified period of time. The action is taken with an identified cohort of pupils (a year group). **All families are formally written to by the school, outlining the Spotlight process.** Formal meetings are held after a specified period of time, for pupils with continued poor attendance. Targets are set and attendance is monitored for a further specified period of time. **EWS court section issues fines to families, whose pupils fail to improve their attendance.**