



## **St Michael's Academy** **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Values:**

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil 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 Academy 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 96% 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 96%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 96%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

## **Friday Flyer**

A graph is added to show every classes attendance at the end of each half term.

## **Breakfast Club**

Daily Breakfast Club is available 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. Children in receipt of FSM and showing poor punctuality it is encouraged that they attend.

## **Attendance Certificate**

Children with 100% attendance at the end of each Term, receive an attendance certificate, signed by the Head Teacher to take home and keep. Certificates are presented each term, to reward those who achieve excellent attendance.

In addition to this all 100% pupils for the Term go into a drawer for a chance to win a prize.

## **Parent/teacher evenings**

Teachers are informed of all attendance for each pupils with those with low attendance highlighted for these to be discussed during parents evenings. This provides an opportunity for class 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 Teacher.

## **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 13.25.

### **School Attendance Letters**

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. These letters are used to highlight to parents where their child's attendance is in comparison to our expectation.

Meeting will take place to support these letters with parents of children under 95% on how we can support families improve their attendance and the expectations we have on them attending school regularly.

If they are significantly below our expected 96% and persistently absent they will receive a letter requesting evidence for all future absences. Failing to produce this evidence could result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Weekly/biweekly attendance reports will be sent home to those who have poor attendance or are high profile children.

### **Punctuality**

Children arriving late are expected to be signed in at the office where their time of arrival is recorded. Those who are persistently late will be reported to the Head Teacher.

### **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. St Michael's Academy follows this system:

- Text or email sent to parents
- Phone parents' contact number(s) to ascertain the reason for absence if no response has been received from text
- If the school administrator is unable to make contact with a parent, they will refer this to the Head Teacher and PFSA

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.

St Michael's Academy must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If St Michael's Academy have not received information for the absence within a week a letter is sent to parents giving them a final chance to respond before this is recorded as unauthorised. If no response has been received after 2 weeks then the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised).

### **Attendance Meetings**

St Michael's Academy 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 96% and where an improvement isn't seen a following letter is sent requesting medical evidence to support absences. If there is still no improvement, a meeting will be arranged with the parents to discuss their attendance and support available.

### **Children Missing in Education and Home Visits**

For high priority/vulnerable children a home visit will take place 24 hours after no contact from parents. All home visits will take place before lunch time and will involve two members of staff, one from either SLT or safeguarding team plus an additional staff member.

Those who are persistently absent or who are under 90% a home visit will take place 48 hours after no contact from parents.

All children – after 72 hours if not seen or heard from parents then a home visit will be carried out before 12pm. Further to this children who do not have any attendance issues but are absent unexpectedly and no contact can be made to parents a home visit will be made when SLT deem appropriate either within 24 hours or 48hours.

### **Moving Abroad/Out of Area**

Any children leaving the country or out of area with no school lined up need to put this in writing and complete an exit from school form. After 5 days this will be sent along with a CME form to the CME team and we will follow counties procedures and school procedures for home visits if local or phone call if they are not local. CME will inform the school of the date they can be removed from our roll and until they must stay on our system.

If staying in the country and we know the new school they will be attending our School Office will contact them on their start date to confirm their arrival. Once this has been confirmed all files and pupils details will be sent to their new school.

### **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 led 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 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.

### **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.**

**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 April 2020***

## **Appendix 1**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **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 meet with the Office Manager to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

#### **Office Manager**

- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Somerset Local Authority policies and procedures.
- 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 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.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for Head Teacher/Governors/SLT to analyse.
- To contact parents/carers by letter, following persistent instances of lateness or absence.
- To maintain clear 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 support Head Teacher 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.

#### **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 check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the Head Teacher and Office Manager, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- 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 oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

## **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 1.25 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- 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 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.
- 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