



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

St. Michael's Nursery & Infant School believe that all pupils benefit from the education we provide and therefore need to have regular school attendance. In order to achieve this we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems that may impede full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible.

Aims

The expectations of St. Michael's Nursery and Infants School are that there will be:

- regular attendance from all pupils, achieving attendance records consistently of over 95% per year and aiming for the highest possible attendance
- no unauthorised absences other than holidays not agreed taken in term time, and that the communication between home and school in regard to absences will be extremely effective
- punctual attendance where lateness will be discouraged by the school and by the parents
- All pupils have an equal right and access to an education in accordance with the National Curriculum.

It is recognised that:

- The majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society.
- Pupils and their parents may need to be supported and so pupils are rewarded at the end of each term in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities by receiving Gold, Silver and Bronze and improved attendance certificates).
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children's attendance at school as required by law (see below).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a proper full time education.

Parents'/Carers Duties

It is the responsibility of the parent under the law to ensure that their child is registered at a school or has other arrangements which provide an effective education. Furthermore it is incumbent on the parent to ensure that the child attends school regularly and punctually.

The School

The school is required by law to keep and publish records of attendance and absence. Pupils should be registered under their birth names unless they have been legally changed. Where a problem arises the school has a responsibility to notify other agencies.

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The Local Authority (LA)

- The LA is responsible by law for making sure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend their school regularly. The LA employ Family support workers to support both School and parents/Carers where there are attendance concerns. Failure of parents to fulfil their legal responsibilities in regard to children's attendance may in extreme circumstances lead to an education supervision order/parenting order at court, a penalty notice or a prosecution in the criminal court.
- All unaccounted for absences will be promptly investigated, and parents and pupils will be kept informed about any attendance concerns.
- External support services can offer support should the need arise.
- Attendance issues will be given the highest profile through Parent's Evenings, Governors, School prospectus, newsletters, letter prior to commencing school etc.

Governors:

- Attendance will be an agenda item at the first governors' meeting after the completion of the previous term. The Head teacher will report to the governing body at this meeting highlighting progress against the school's action plan.
- The Governors will nominate a member to work alongside the Head teacher on attendance issues.

Procedure

The whole School registration takes place in each classroom at 9.00 am and in the afternoon at 1pm. One whole school day counts as 2 sessions of attendance for each pupil at the school. The maximum attendance achievable in any school year is 380 sessions.

The completion of registers is a legal requirement. All attendance registers are completed using the Scholar Pack system and each absence is noted and logged on a daily basis. The register also provides a daily log of all children in school which is used in the event of a fire drill, or in the unfortunate case of a real fire.

Attendance registers are closed 15 minutes after being taken for the morning sessions to allow for the vagaries of the local buses, local parking problems and road congestion. Children who are late have to enter via the main door where the office staff can then add them to the register. In the afternoon they do not remain 'open' for any period.

If a pupil arrives after 9.15 a.m. and there has been no advance notification from the parent/carer they will be marked as an unauthorised absentee for that session.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and if the need arises parents will be challenged. If this child continues to arrive late after a period of three months the head teacher will notify the local authority.

Fire Drill

Fire lists are taken from Scholar Pack of all children who are in attendance on that day.

The daily list is kept in the office and is easy accessible. In the event of a fire the list is taken outside and used to check that all children and staff are present

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Lateness

Late arrival at school is of serious concern as it results in the disruption of the school day for the child concerned who has missed the start of a lesson, for his/her classmates who lose quality teacher time when instructions have to be repeated and for the administrative staff who then have to recalculate pupil numbers particularly for school dinners. Lateness is actively discouraged by the school. Parents are reminded of the importance of punctuality regularly by Newsletter and at Parents evenings.

Children are regularly reminded by their teacher and in Assemblies.

It is to be expected that very occasionally a child may be late due to a traffic or family problem or medical appointment. The concern is in regard to any consistent late arrivals (more than one in any given week). If there are children who fall into this category then the following procedure takes place;

1. Parent is reminded by the class teacher or secretary of importance of punctual attendance
2. Head teacher is informed by teacher or secretary of persisting problem.
4. Head teacher contacts parent informally (usually by phone)
5. Formal written letter from Head teacher sent to the parent
6. Follow up letter from the Head stating referral to the Children's Services imminent if no improvement.
7. Referral to the Children's Services.

Each stage is only reached if there has been no improvement after the previous intervention.

ABSENCE

The school actively encourages and expects regular attendance. There will of course, over a child's educational career, possibly be times when a child is unable to attend. Such absences fall into two main categories.

Short Term Absences

These may be due to illness; bereavement; attendance at the doctor, clinic or hospital ; dental appointments; Religious Observance; particular needs of travellers. These are reasons that can be authorised for absence. Reasons for short term absence such as birthday parties, Relatives coming to visit, cheaper holidays in England and abroad, family day trips etc. **are not acceptable grounds** for a parent to keep their child off school, it is a negation of parental responsibility.

Notification

Short term absences must be notified to the office either in person, by telephone or by letter either **in advance**.

The secretary will contact parents/carers on the **1st day of** absence if there has been no notification, this is to ensure the safety of the pupil. The reason for the absence is then recorded on the Scholar Pack system.

In the event of not being able to get a response by telephone then a text will be sent.

After 20 minutes if the first text is not responded to then a second will be sent requesting a response within 15 minutes. If a response is not forthcoming then an external agency will be contacted as the child is deemed as missing.

External agencies used are Children's Services and Police.

The Headteacher monitors all attendance on a daily basis and any concerns are swiftly dealt with.

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MONITORING

The Secretary and Headteacher monitor patterns of attendance on a daily basis by studying the attendance registers and Scholar pack information. Where there are individual cases of unauthorised absence, long term absence or other concerns arising from this the following action is taken;

1. Where there is a developing pattern of absence the Head will send a letter reminding parents of their responsibilities in regard to attendance.
2. Meetings will be held with Parents/carers.
3. Continued concern results in a referral to School Health using the appropriate form
4. Following recommendations from the School Health, continued monitoring of the individual child's attendance for a specified period will continue
5. If there is no further improvement the School or Cumbria County Council Inclusion Officer reserve the right to seek recourse through the courts.

In addition OFSTED may monitor absence codes and notes where there are attendance concerns.

REPORTING

A child's attendance record is published in the End of Year Report to parents and at request of staff, parents and relevant outside agencies at various times throughout the year.

Pupil attendance figures are regularly reported to the Governing Body.

Holidays

Holidays in term time **are not**, under any circumstances, an automatic right. The government have stated that any holidays taken during term time will be deemed as unauthorised absences, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Examples of exceptional family circumstances could include:

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Parents' employment restrictions – you are likely to be asked to provide evidence from your employer that this is the only time you can take leave
- Significant family events or circumstances

Absence

- Before booking a holiday or organising time out of school, parents must make a request, in writing, for leave of absence and the head teacher will consider the child's current attendance, academic achievement, time of year etc before deciding whether or not to authorise the absence. The head teacher is the only person who can authorise an absence and she will decide on the number of days of the absence.

Approved Education Activity

Pupils will not be deemed absent when out of school to take part in:

- Sporting activity
- Educational visits

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PROMOTING ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

- Children are actively praised by their teachers for their good attendance and time keeping.
- Termly certificates for those children who have 100%
- The 'Attendance Cup' is awarded termly to the class with the greatest % attendance and this is published in the school newsletter and displayed on the school notice board.
- Each child with 100% attendance over the academic year is given a certificate on the final assembly in the Summer Term.
- Attendance data will be collected and analysed regularly, and combined with an annual review of the school attendance policy will inform future practice and school targets which will be set out in an action plan to be shared with parents and carers.
- Consultation between the school and the local authority will be arranged to support and set targets for poor attenders in partnership with parents. Other external services will be made known to parents where appropriate.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

Signature Head Teacher Date

SignatureChair of Governors Date