



# **St Michael's CE Primary School**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Interim Executive Board</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>May 2018</b>
<b>Date for Review</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>IEB</b>

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## St. Michael's CE Primary School, Playden

This policy reflects the vision and aims of St. Michael's CE Primary School by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

### **Principles**

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

***Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.***

***Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:***

- ❖ ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **Procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

### **Absences:**

Parents should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. It is important that we are provided with details of the reason for absence.

### **First Day Contact:**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

### **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

### **Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

You have to get permission from the head teacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

You can only do this if:

- you make an application to the head teacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
- there are exceptional circumstances

You will need to complete an Absence Request Form/Withdrawal from Learning Form, available from the school office. The Head of School will then make a decision.

- If the Head of School does not authorise the absence and the child is taken away for five days or more, the Head of School may ask East Sussex County Council to issue a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent for each child (or £60 per parent for each child if paid within 21 days).

**Absences are only authorised in exceptional circumstances – holidays are not considered an exceptional circumstance. Additionally, it is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.**

**Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives** The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- To carry out termly monitoring for all pupils
- To track the attendance of vulnerable groups i.e., PPG; SEN & persistent absentees
- To increase the profile of attendance through Celebration Assemblies (tokens presented) and 100% certificates with prizes for 100% attendance. Attendance awards are publicised in the fortnightly newsletter to parents.
- For persistent absentees, monitor and set targets for attendance; continued dialogue with parents.

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Head of School: Cherane Marshall

**Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Policy adopted: March 2017

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Reviewed May 2018

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