

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

**OUR SCHOOL PRAYER:**

*What does the **Lord** ask of you?*

*To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6vs.8

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## Contact details

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

**Name:** Sarah Beardsmore

**Contact details:** 0121 561 6881 or [contact.staff@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:contact.staff@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk)

The name and contact details of the school staff member students and parent/carer(s) should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

**Name:** Nicola Cartwright



**Contact details:** 0121 561 6881 or [contact.staff@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:contact.staff@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk)

Parent/carer(s) for more individual support with attendance should contact the Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year.

**Contact details:** 0121 561 6881 or [HOYs@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:HOYs@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk) or [assistantheadsofyear@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:assistantheadsofyear@st-michaels.sandwell.sch.uk)

The name of our linked Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is Kerry Thorton.

### Signed by:

 _____	<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Date: <u>03/10/2024</u>
 _____	<b>Headteacher</b>	Date: <u>03/10/2024</u>

Date of adoption: October 2024

Review date: December 2027

## **1. Statement of intent**

1.1 In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do. All members of the school community are committed to upholding the St Michael's Church of England Christian vision:

- to show love, care, and kindness to all in our community
- to value what we have and to share with others
- to enable everyone to achieve their full potential

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 St Michael's Church of England High School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for students to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

2.2 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

2.3 Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

2.4 The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

2.5 This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that students succeed whilst at school
- ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

2.6 It has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, local Headteacher Associations, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor student attendance.

2.7 In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

- 2.8 Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:
- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, secure, and valued
  - raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality – 97% or more (**please see Appendix 1: The Importance of Attendance**)
  - ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- 2.9 For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is a rule of this school that students must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.
- 2.10 In line with DfE ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ (2023) and DfE ‘Keeping children in safe in education’ (2024), all staff will receive training on the importance of early intervention and strategies to support improving attendance.

### **3. Promoting Regular Attendance**

- 3.1 At St Michael’s, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our students from the outset. It is a central part of our school’s vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding, and wellbeing.
- 3.2 The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school.
- 3.3 The Senior Attendance Champion will work alongside the Attendance Officer and linked governor to promote, maintain, and track attendance.
- 3.4 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, students, and all members of school staff.
- 3.5 To help us all to focus on this, we will:
- submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools
  - build strong relationships and work jointly with families
  - give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
  - promote the benefits of high attendance
  - accurately complete admission attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law
  - celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
  - reward good or improving attendance
  - add any additional ways in which you promote and incentivise school attendance
  - report to parents/carers regularly on their child’s attendance and the impact on their progress
  - contact parents/carers should their child’s attendance fall below the school’s target for attendance

## 4. Understanding Types of Absence

- 4.1 Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any student's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 4.2 Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.
- 4.3 Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.
- 4.4 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.
- 4.5 Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):
- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
  - absences which have never been properly explained
  - children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session
  - shopping trips
  - looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
  - their own or family birthdays
  - holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends
  - day trips
  - weddings
  - other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

## 5. Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

- 5.1 A student is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any student's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents to resolve this. All students who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee. **(Please see Appendix 1: The Importance of Attendance)**
- 5.2 A student who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as 'severely absent'. Students within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.
- 5.3 Where a student at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g., social services, to support the student in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child

## 6. Absence Procedures

6.1 The name and contact details of the school staff member students and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name: Nicola Cartwright  
Contact details: 0121 561 6881

6.2 We monitor and review all students' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

6.3 If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:30 am
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8:30 am.
- Parents are required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the student and the impact on the student's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.
- The school will only grant a student a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.
- Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the student can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.
- Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - during Year 7 when a student is settling into the school, unless certain exceptional circumstances apply, e.g., the death of a family member
  - immediately before and during assessment periods
  - when a student's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
  - where a student's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason
- If term-time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS and Sandwell Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness (appendix XXX).

6.4 If your child is absent, we will:

- telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you, however, it is your responsibility to contact us
- if we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding

6.5 If absence continues, we will:

- write to you if your child's attendance is below 97%/causing concern, and/or where punctuality is a concern
- arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion, Attendance Officer, or Head of Year
- create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child
- offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate
- refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions (**please see Appendix 1: The Importance of Attendance**)

## **7. Lateness**

7.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

7.2 Students who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

7.3 The times of the start and close of the school day for all students at St Michael's Church of England High School are:

- Gates open: 8:15 am
- Doors open: 8:25 am
- Registration starts: 8:40 am
- Registration closes: 9:10 am
- End of the school day: 3:00 pm

7.4 The times of the start and close of the afternoon registration are:

### **Years 11, 10 and 9**

- Registration starts: 1:00 pm
- Registration closes: 1:20 pm

### **Years 7 and 8**

- Registration starts: 12:25 pm
- Registration closes: 12:45 pm
- Period 5 starts: 1:20 pm
- Students not present at the start of afternoon registration will be marked as late.



## 7.5 How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8:25 am when children can begin to come into school.
- Registers are taken at 8:40 am.
- Children arriving after 8:40 am are required to come into school via the school reception.
- At 9:10 am, the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.

### **Late detention**

7.6 If a student arrives after 8:40 am to school or morning registration, they will be issued with an immediate 15-minute, same day, lunchtime detention.

7.7 Failure to attend the same day lunchtime detention will result in a sanction of refocus, the following day or whenever possible.

7.8 Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If a child has a persistent lateness record, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having difficulties getting their child to school on time. We expect parents/carers and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

## **8. Punctuality to lessons**

8.1 Students are expected to arrive promptly to all lessons and other activities when in school.

8.2 Students that receive five or more late marks during a half term will be placed on a punctuality mandatory card.

8.3 If punctuality continues to be a concern and does not improve, sanctions will be applied in line with the Behaviour Management Policy.

## **9 Understanding barriers to attendance**

9.1 Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s.

9.2 Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

9.3 Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these students; however, we will work with families and students to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

9.4 Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all students who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

9.5 See Annex A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

9.6 The school staff member students and parents should contact due to medical needs or SEND is Wendy Hill.

## **10. Truancy**

10.1 Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

10.2 All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of students and understand the importance of continuity in each student's learning.

10.3 Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the reception and sign back in again on their return.

10.4 Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the student not attending school.

10.5 The following procedures will be taken in the event of truancy:

- in the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the student, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken
- if any further truancy occurs, the school will consider issuing a penalty notice
- a penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time, and persistent late arrival at school

## **11. Missing children**

11.1 Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing whilst at school:

- the member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform the Headteacher immediately
- the office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- a member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher
- the following areas will be systematically searched:
  - all classrooms
  - all corridors
  - all toilets
  - changing rooms
  - the library
  - any outbuildings
  - the school grounds
- available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted

- if the student has not been found, then the parents of the student will be notified
- the school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- if the parents have had no contact from the student, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- if the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- when the student has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the student to ensure they are safe and well
- parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located

11.2 Students who regularly choose to go missing in school will receive a sanction in line with the Behaviour Management Policy.

## **12. Roles and responsibilities**

12.1 The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies
- arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role
- working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals
- ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation
- handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedure
- having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

12.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- ensuring that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence

12.3 Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy and ensuring students do so too
- ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- modelling good attendance behaviour
- using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated
- where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day

12.4 The attendance officer is responsible for:

- the overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- developing a clear vision for improving attendance
- monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- communicating with students and parents with regard to attendance

- following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance
- informing the LA of any student's name being deleted from the admission register unless exceptions apply

12.5 Parents are responsible for:

- providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- providing the school with more than one emergency contact number
- updating the school if their details change
- the attendance of their children at school
- promoting good attendance with their children

12.6 Students are responsible for:

- attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school
- arriving punctually to lessons when at school

### **13. Local Authority attendance support services**

13.1 The Schools Attendance Support Service works strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

13.2 Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Sandwell Code of Conduct) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

### **14. School Attendance and the Law**

14.1 New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

14.2 Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

14.3 A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

### **15. National Framework for Penalty Notices**

15.1 There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

15.2 Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year

period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

- 15.3 See Annex B for the Sandwell Code of Conduct
- 15.4 There is no entitlement in law for students to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”
- 15.5 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances", and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.
- 15.6 It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or their designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request, and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Sandwell Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

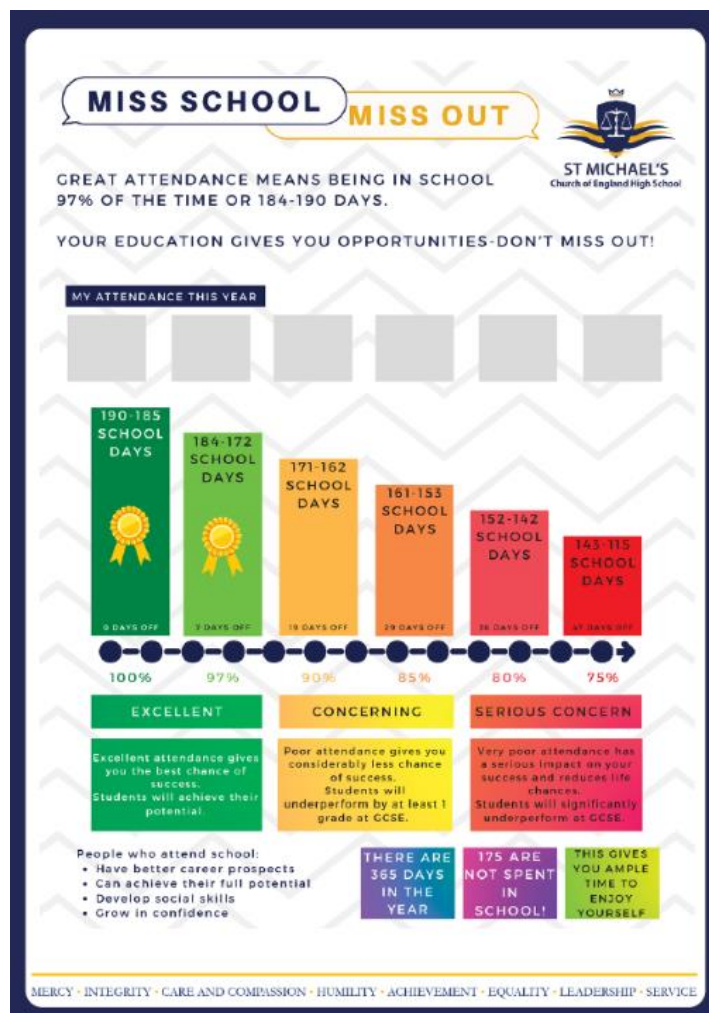
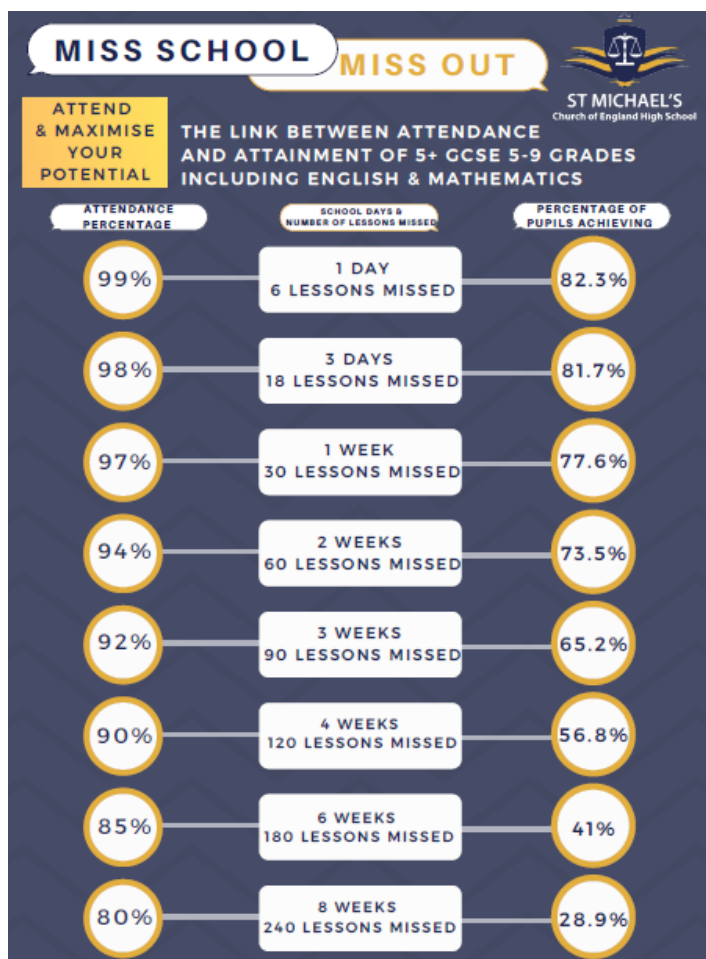
## **16. Absence data**

- 16.1 We use data to monitor, identify and support individual students or groups of students when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit student attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent students are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.
- 14.2 We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## Appendix 1: The Importance of Attendance

Attendance is imperative in order to reach the student's full potential, and, at St Michael's, we aspire for all students to attend school every day. We expect a 97% or above attendance rate. People who attend school have excellent career prospects, progress to their full potential, and have excellent social and emotional skills. Form tutors will be tracking individual attendance and whole form attendance over the year.

Attendance During One School Year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9	18	2	54
90%	19	38	4	114
85%	29	58	6	174
80%	38	72	8	228
75%	48	96	10	288
70%	57	114	11.5	342
65%	67	134	13.5	402



## Student Attendance Action Plan

STUDENT DETAILS			
Student name			
Form group			
Current Attendance			
CONTACT INFORMATION			
Date			
Times			
COMMUNICATION WITH:			
Student		Parent	
Agency		Other	
TYPE OF COMMUNICATION:			
Phone		Letter	
Meeting			
<b>Details from the meeting:</b>			
.....			
.....			
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Action/Issue/Concern	Person Responsible	Date Started	Date Due	Date Completed	Comment/Progress

**Outcome from Action Plan including details:**

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.....

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.....

.....

<b>Parent/ Carer Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Staff Name &amp; Signature:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>Venue:</b>





Schools Attendance Support Service  
**Leave of Absence Request**

Before completing this form, please read the Guidance Notes for Parents

**Section A: Child's Details**

All sections must be fully completed – Please complete a separate Leave of Absence Request for each child

School			
Child's Name		Date of Birth	
Child's Address			

**Section B: Reason for Leave of Absence – THIS MUST BE COMPLETED**

I would like to request a Leave of Absence for the above-named child:

First date of Absence from school		Last date of Absence from school	
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Head Teachers can only authorise a Leave of Absence Request if they consider that the detail and information you provide is an exceptional circumstance. You **MUST** provide all the details and information you would want the Head Teacher to consider in deciding if your request can be granted.


By signing this application, I understand and agree the following:

- I have read the Leave of Absence Request Guidance Notes and understand if the Head Teacher declines the Leave of Absence, the school can request issue of a Penalty Notice (a fine of up to £160 in respect of each child) and I/we may be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.
- I am a Parent/Carer with whom the child 'normally resides'.
- I understand it is the Head Teacher's decision as to what is and what is not an "exceptional circumstance", and I should discuss any questions I have regarding the decision made by the Head Teacher prior to the absence starting.

Parent/Carer PRINT NAME	Applicant	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	
Parent/Carer SIGNATURE	Applicant		Date	
Relationship to student			Parent/Carer Telephone No.	
			Parent/Carer Mobile Tel No.	

Please turn over for Section C

## Section C: Additional Parent/Carer(s) / siblings

Please enter details of the parent/carer(s) responsible for taking the child out of school

Parent/Carer FULL NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	
Address (if different from student's home address)			
Relationship to student			
Parent/Carer FULL NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	
Address (if different from student's home address)			
Relationship to student			
Siblings: <i>Please complete if any siblings (brother/sisters) attend another school</i>	Name	School	Date of Birth

## Request for Penalty Notice – SCHOOL USE ONLY – all sections of form must be completed

Date LOA received		Date applicant advised of outcome	
How applicant was advised of outcome (e.g., verbally, telephone, email, meeting)			
Who Should Penalty Notices be issued to? See Leave of Absence Guidance Notes – Section C			
Decline letter sent to Parent/Carer(s) and copy attached	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Attendance Summary/Certificate attached	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Data Collection Sheet attached	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have read the Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes and understand that once requested and issued a Penalty Notice cannot be withdrawn other than in the circumstances detailed.			<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreed by Head Teacher	Date	Signature of Head Teacher	
Referral to Schools Attendance Support Service	Date		
Referrer Name	Position in School		
Referrer E-Mail Address			

Please send your completed form via MOVEit  
**T3335595\_AS\_SCHOOLNAMELOA-CHILDINITIALS**

# Guidance Notes for Parents

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence **may not** be authorised unless:

- (a) An application has been made in advance to the Head Teacher by a Parent/Carer with whom the student normally resides (lives with most of the time); and
- (b) The Head Teacher, or a person authorised by them, considers that Leave of Absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

It is only a parent **'with whom the child normally resides'** (lives with most of the time) that can apply for a Leave of Absence for their child. A parent/carer who does not live with the child **cannot** apply for a Leave of Absence.

Parents/carers should ensure that any Leave of Absence application is made **in advance** of any Leave of Absence to be taken.

Parents/carers should ensure that they know if their Leave of Absence application has been authorised by the Head Teacher **before** planning, booking, or paying for anything in relation to that Leave of Absence application. It is your responsibility to check school holiday dates. Please check with your school.

Parents/carers should ensure they provide the Head Teacher with **all** details and information they would want the Head Teacher to know in deciding if a Leave of Absence can be authorised.

It is at the Head Teacher's discretion to decide if the detail and information provided by a parent/carer can be considered as an 'exceptional circumstance' and agree if any Leave of Absence can be authorised. Schools operate in conjunction with the Local Authority to adhere to National Guidance.

Disagreements between parents/carer(s) and schools in relation to what is and is not an 'exceptional circumstance' cannot be considered by the Schools Attendance Support Service. You will need to discuss this with your school directly.

If a Leave of Absence is not authorised and the child is then absent from school, the Head Teacher can request that the Schools Attendance Support Service issue parents/carer(s) with Penalty Notices.

The Schools Attendance Support Service can only issue Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence following receipt of a request to do so by the school.

Penalty Notices are issued based on the information and detail provided by the school and in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/schoolattendancepenalty>

Once issued, a Penalty Notice cannot be 'withdrawn' unless it meets the criteria detailed in Paragraph 34 of the Code of Conduct.

With effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, there is a change in how Penalty Notices will be issued:

The fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, **or** £160 if paid within 28 days.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action/prosecution will be considered.

**Unpaid Penalty Notices may result in Parents/Carer(s) being prosecuted under Section 444(1) and fined up to £1,000 per Parent/Carer per child plus Court costs. If a history of offences exists, parents may be prosecuted under Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 and the court can impose fines up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.**

Annex A: DfE guidance 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

Annex B: Sandwell Code of Conduct

<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/117/penalty-notice-code-of-conduct>

Annex C: this will be sent to schools when updated

Annex D: DfE external document template (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2022/12/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf>