

Michael Hall

a Steiner Waldorf School

Attendance Policy

Policy Owner	Senior Leadership Team
Formally endorsed by	Council of Trustees
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1. INTRODUCTION & DEFINITIONS

Attendance and punctuality at school is important for the balanced education and development of our children and we expect all children, who are fit and healthy, to attend school in term time, every day. A key factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and schooling, both within school and the home, and to this end we strive to make our school a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

We know that some pupils find it harder than others to attend School and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work with our pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance. We will endeavour to build strong and trusting relationships and work together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with school's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing. This is essential to ensure that pupils get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

compulsory school age

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age (see below) 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 school or by education otherwise than at school.

1. 5th birthday between 1st April and 31st August compulsory school age on 1st September
2. 5th birthday between 1st September and 31st December compulsory school age on 1st January
3. 5th birthday between 1st January and 31st March compulsory school age on 1st April.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy complies with our Parental Contract.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

Tali Michaels is the named trustee for Safeguarding and attendance.

3.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Trustees.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

The principal is responsible for ensuring the school keeps an admission and attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions.

3.3 Designated Senior Leader

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sarah Stokes and can be contacted at Sarah.Stokes@michaelhall.co.uk

3.4 Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 6)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the principal
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Supporting with targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Attendance Officer will

- collate all day-to-day telephone and e-mails regarding attendance and input onto the School Management System (ISAMS).
- Input the paper registers taken twice daily by the Class Teachers and Guardians onto ISAMS.

Any absences for which there has been no authorisation and/or notifications the Attendance Officer will contact the student's Parents / Carers to ascertain why they are not in school and mark the registers accordingly.

The attendance officer is Helen Nash and can be contacted at attendance@michaelhall.co.uk or by telephoning 01342 822275

3.5 Class Teachers and Guardians

Class Teachers and Guardian are responsible for recording attendance twice daily using the correct codes and submitting to the Attendance Officer twice a day after registration is taken.

3.6 Parent and Carers

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means that parents/carers must:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Telephones the school to report their child's absence by 08.15am on the day of the absence
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend School every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time

4. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

Our attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. The doors open at 8am and pupils are expected to be either at their places and ready to learn or (for the Upper School) in Registration ready to say the Morning Verse by 8.15am. Registration formally closes at 08:45. The Afternoon register for the Lower and Middle School (1-8) will be at 13.25 and for the Upper School (9-12) at 14.15.

- See appendix 1 for the attendance codes

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when the school has given the pupil approval for their absence in advance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Only the Principal can authorise an absence and not all absences will be classified as authorised. Please note that authorised absence still counts towards your child's overall attendance figures.

4.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away without the permission of the school.

4.3 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence - for example if their child is unable to attend due to ill health by 08:15am or as soon as practically possible. This can be done by calling Reception and leaving a voicemail on the Attendance voicemail, emailing attendance@michaelhall.co.uk or via the Parent portal.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.4 Planned absence

Medical and Dental appointment

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

This can be done by calling Reception, emailing attendance@michaelhall.co.uk or via the parent portal.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (before 08:45) using the appropriate code.
- A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent (after 08:45) using the appropriate code.

4.6 Following up unexplained absences

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will follow up any absences by contacting the students' parents/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason and identify whether the absence is approved or not. If absence continues without

explanation the Safeguarding team will be notified to assess what assistance / action is required.

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Schools may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The principal will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the principal's discretion.

Requests for leave of absence in term time should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. Please e-mail all requests to attendance@michaelhall.co.uk

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** for compulsory school age children include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments - as previously explained.

Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English, and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Other exceptions - where the school is satisfied with the authenticity, genuine need and where an agreement is reached with the providers of alternative education, regarding the child's safeguarding arrangements (confirmation of appropriate Safeguarding measures and policy will be required):

- Certain sporting activities
- Off-site education

Authorised term time absence will not be granted for

- Term time holidays
- Family celebrations

5.2 Flexi-Schooling

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full time education and a part timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programmes or other agreements will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

The school has the right to refuse to allow part-time schooling but when agreement to a part-time timetable has taken place, i.e., a pupil is absent from school for part of the week or day, the attendance register will be recorded as an authorised absence.

6. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The Attendance Officer will monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level and identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss ways of improvement.

The persistent absence threshold is 10% (this is equal to 1 day or more every 2 weeks). If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of School.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

6.1 Using data to monitor attendance

The school will provide regular attendance reports to Class Teachers & Guardians, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. We will use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.2 Reporting to parents

Your child's attendance will be monitored and discussed with you if we have concerns regularly throughout the year. Attendance and absence data will be included within the annual report at the end of each academic year.

6.2 School Refusers

In the event of a child becoming a school refuser, the Attendance Officer will work with the Parent/Carer to assess the child and ascertain the best strategies for getting the child back into school. At the end of a period of one-half term, a formal assessment meeting will be held with the parents (and child if appropriate) to assess the situation and determine an action plan with clear review periods.

In most cases a maximum period of one term will be given to try to resolve the situation, failing which the child may be taken off the school roll.

6.3 Children Missing from Education

Children missing from education can mean either a child being taken off a school roll, failing to attend on the agreed admission date or a child on extended absence or repeated absence.

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the Parents or Carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school may contact the support services for the Local Authority (LA) where the child has normal residence, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the Parents or Carers understand the seriousness of the situation. We have a legal duty to inform the appropriate LA within 5 days of a child being added to the admission register (save for those joining at the start of our youngest year) and where a child transfers to another school or is home schooled. We also have a legal duty to inform the appropriate LA in accordance with their requested procedures if:

- A child is absent for 10 days following on from a period of approved leave
- A child is absent for 20 consecutive days without approved leave
- A child fails to attend school regularly
- A child is deleted from the register when the next school is not known
- A child is removed from the school roll at non-standard transition points

Parents should be aware that Local Authorities reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any Parents or Carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their child/children to school on a regular basis.

With due regard for Children Missing Education, Michael Hall School will notify the relevant local authorities (in accordance with their requested procedures) when we are about to remove a pupil's name from the School Admission Register under any of the 15

grounds listed in the regulations (CME Annex A). These 15 grounds include but are not limited to:

- When the family has apparently moved away
- When the child has been certified as medically unfit to attend
- When the child is in custody for more than four months
- When the child has been permanently excluded
- The child has been taken out of school to be home educated

This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the Admission Register at standard transition points and/or when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by us. When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the Local Authority will be provided in accordance with their forms/procedures but should include contact details as well as the reason for removal and, if appropriate, the ongoing School or place of education. We will also notify Local Authorities within five days of adding a pupil's name to the Admission Register at a non-standard transition point. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point and/or at the start of the first year of education normally provided by us.

- We will seek to obtain written confirmation from parents/carers if and when we find out that one of our pupils is being removed to be educated outside of the school system. A copy of this will be forwarded to the appropriate Local Authority.

7. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Upper & Lower School behaviour Policies

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed