



## Attendance Policy

Policy Owner:	Principal
Formally Endorsed By:	Board of Trustees
Endorsement Date:	June 2025
Next Review Date:	June 2026

Human connection in all we do

# Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School Attendance Policy

(Managing the attendance and absence of students)

## 1. INTRODUCTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for ensuring every child has the best opportunity to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. We expect all pupils who are well enough to attend to be in school **every day and on time**, unless there is a valid reason for absence. Good attendance is fundamental to achieving high attainment and developing positive attitudes towards learning.

At Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School we are committed to fostering a **safe, welcoming and supportive environment** where all pupils feel valued and eager to engage in learning. We understand that some pupils may face challenges in maintaining consistent attendance. Therefore, we actively work with pupils and parent/carers to identify and remove any **barriers to attendance** by providing the right support, at the right time.

Improving attendance is a **shared responsibility** and cannot be managed in isolation. It must be closely aligned with other school priorities, including:

- A broad and engaging **curriculum** that meets pupils needs
- Clear and consistent **behaviour policies**
- Effective **bullying prevention** strategies
- Tailored support for pupils with **Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)**
- Robust **pastoral care** and focus on **mental health and well-being including SEMH**

By embedding attendance improvement within these areas, we ensure pupils can thrive academically and personally, improving their attainment, **well-being and future opportunities**.

### 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.

## 1.1 Aims

This policy sets out the school's commitment to maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality across the whole school community. The aims include:

- Setting **high expectations** for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting the importance and benefits of **good attendance**
- Reducing absence, including **Persistent Absence (below 90%) and Severe Absence (below 50%)**
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the **full-time education** they are entitled to
- Acting early to address and resolve emerging patterns of absence
- Building **strong, supportive relationships** with families to encourage regular attendance
- Actively promoting and supporting **punctuality** (including attending lessons)

## 2 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The school fosters a positive link between attendance and wider school culture, encouraging partnerships with families to support attendance improvement.

**This document is informed by:**

Statutory Guidance: The Education Act 1996 & amendments 2002 & 2011

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 & amendments 2012 & 2013

The Children Act 1989 & 2004

The Education and Skills Act 2008

DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Statutory Guidance August 2024

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Statutory Guidance 2024

DfE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance September 2016

DfE Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions Statutory Guidance 2015

DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance Dec 2023

Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2013

**Non-Statutory Guidance (Best Practice):**

Regional Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocols & Early Help Pathways.

DfE Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs Guidance (Dec 2023)

Michael Hall Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies.

DfE Guidance Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (Feb 2023)

DfE Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance: Effective practice examples (Feb 2023)

DfE Providing Remote Education Guidance (Jan 2023)

DfE Parental Responsibility Measures Guidance (Jan 2015)

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **3.1 The Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees holds overall responsibility for ensuring the high standards of attendance are maintained and that the school meets all legal and regulatory obligations. The Trustees will:

- Set high expectations for school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers regarding attendance.
- Ensure that school leaders fulfil all statutory and regulatory duties, including accurate attendance record keeping and reporting.
- Support leaders to promote a whole school culture that prioritises excellent attendance within the school policies, culture and ethos.
- Ensure that attendance processes are effectively implemented and that adequate resources and staffing are allocated to support attendance.
- Support and challenge school leaders to adapt attendance strategies to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data to focus improvement efforts on pupils or groups requiring support.
- Collaborate with the Principal to develop a comprehensive action plan if attendance issues persist.
- Hold the Principal accountable for the effective implementation of the Attendance Policy.

Tali Michaels is the named trustee for Safeguarding and Attendance.

### **3.2 The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for leading and implementing the school's strategic approach to attendance. They will:

- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented consistently across the school.
- Impact the importance of good attendance and punctuality into the school's culture, ethos and values.
- Monitor attendance data and provide regular reports to the Trustees.
- Ensure daily registers are maintained in line with school policy and regulatory requirements.
- Authorise or unauthorised absences in accordance with school policy and relevant statutory guidance.
- Lead the development and delivery of attendance improvement plans when necessary.
- Ensure that all staff understand and fulfil their roles in supporting school attendance.

Emmeline Hawker is the Principal

### **3.3 The Attendance Champion (designated member of Senior Leadership Team)**

The Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are implemented by staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted support to pupils and families
- Ensure that all staff receive regular professional development related to attendance.

- In collaboration with the attendance officer, dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities.
- Support and oversee the work done by the attendance officer.

Charlie Parker is the attendance champion.

### **3.4 Attendance and Safeguarding Officer**

The Attendance Officer will:

- Collate all day-to-day telephone and emails regarding attendance and input onto the School Management System (ISAMS)
- Maintain accurate and timely attendance records, ensuring registers, taken twice daily by the Class Teachers and Guardians and subject teachers, have been entered correctly into ISAMS
- Conduct daily monitoring of attendance and follow up promptly on unexplained absences.
- Any absences for which there has been no authorisation and/or notifications the Attendance and Safeguarding officer will contact the students' parents/carers to ascertain why they are not in school and mark the electronic registers accordingly
- Analyse attendance data to identify trends and attendance concerns, escalate findings to Attendance Champion and senior leaders when necessary.
- Identify and implement early intervention to address emerging attendance issues.
- Support with targeted intervention to pupils and parents/carers to resolve attendance concerns.
- Work with external agencies to support families experiencing attendance challenges.
- Implement school procedures for managing Persistent Absence (including Severe Absence), including issuing attendance contracts if applicable.

Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School is committed to maintaining high standards of attendance in full compliance with all statutory guidance and regulations.

Melissa Matthews is the Attendance & Safeguarding Officer, supported by Rebecca Santos Crowder.

### **3.5 Class Teachers, Guardians and Tutors**

Class Teachers and Guardians are responsible for ensuring that attendance is recorded, for both morning and afternoon registration electronically (on ISAMS) using the correct Department for Education codes (see Appendix 1), in order for the Attendance & Safeguarding Officer to ensure accurate registers are recorded and maintained. Failure to do this regularly will be reported to People and Culture and will form part of appraisals.

If a Class Teacher or Guardian agrees/delegates a tutor to carry out this process for the afternoon registration, the responsibility for that register remains that of the Class Teacher or Guardian.

They will:

- In addition to mandatory registration, record attendance at the start of every lesson and report any unaccounted-for pupils.
- Foster a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality in their classrooms.
- Identify and report attendance concerns, patterns or trends to the Attendance and Safeguarding Officer and/or Attendance Champion.
- Encourage pupils and support them in maintaining regular attendance.
- Work with the pastoral and attendance teams to support students with persistent or severe absence.

### 3.6 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether married or not
- All those who have Parental Responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e., lives with and looks after)

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school every day.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends **every day on time** (before registration starts)
- Telephone the school and/or email: [attendance@michaelhall.co.uk](mailto:attendance@michaelhall.co.uk) to report their child's absence by 08.10am on the day of absence (**and each subsequent day of absence**) and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with a minimum of 2 emergency contact numbers for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day (including counselling and therapy)
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Attendance and Safeguarding Officer: [attendance@michaelhall.co.uk](mailto:attendance@michaelhall.co.uk) or by telephone: 01342 822275
- Engage with support offered by the school to improve their child's attendance when needed including complying with an attendance contract if it is deemed necessary to issue.
- School trials and taster days, for another educational establishment will be authorised for a maximum of three days in any year provided Michael Hall is aware prior to the visit.

### 3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school daily and punctually.
- Attend every timetabled session and punctually.
- Be responsible for catching up on missed work due to absence with teacher support.
- Participate in individual attendance interventions (or re-integration) if they need additional support with attendance and/or punctuality.

## 4. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

By law all schools are required to keep an electronic attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register in accordance with **the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**.

The attendance register at Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second.

- **Morning registration:** school doors open at 08:00am, pupils are expected to be in their designated learning spaces (for the Upper School) or in Registration, ready to recite the **Morning Verse** by 08:15am
- Morning registration formally closes at 08:45am.
- **Afternoon registration:**
  - **Lower and Middle School (Classes 1 to 8)** is at 01:25pm
  - **Upper School (Classes 9 to 12)** is at 02:15pm

All entries in the attendance register will be preserved for a minimum of six years, in line with statutory requirements.

Where amendments are made to the attendance register, the following must be recorded:



- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending and approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to **exceptional circumstances**

As the attendance register reflects the pupil's presence at the time it was taken, this register should only be amended when the reason for absence cannot be established at the time of recording.

Attendance will be recorded using the attendance codes outlined in **Appendix 1**, following the revised coding system introduced in the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**.

## **5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

### **5.1 Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when the school has granted permission for the absence in advance or accepted an explanation provided after the absence as a valid justification. Only the **Principal** has the authority to approve authorised absences.

Authorised absences may include:

- Some illness or medical appointments (medical evidence may be requested if the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness or appointment and may be deemed 'unauthorised')
- Religious observation in line with the recognised faith practises
- Family emergencies with satisfactory explanation
- Approved school activities, trips or educational visits

**Note:** Authorised absences still impact a pupil's overall attendance figures.

### **5.2 Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classed as unauthorised when a pupil is away without the permission of the school
- The school has not approved the reason for the absence
- The absence is unexplained or insufficiently explained
- The absence involved holidays taken during term time
- A pupil arrives after the registration period has closed without a valid reason

Persistent unauthorised absence will be addressed in line with school policy. Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School does not issue penalty notices or fines (the Local Authority may decide to pursue this course of action) but will instead work closely with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance through supportive measures and intervention strategies.

### 5.3 Unplanned absence

A pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08.10am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling 01342 822275 or emailing: [attendance@michaelhall.co.uk](mailto:attendance@michaelhall.co.uk) the Attendance Team with the reason for absence.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, the Attendance & safeguarding Officer will then investigate.

Where the absence is longer than five days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card/letter or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

### 5.4 Granting approval for term-time absence

Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term-time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The **Principal** will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context of the request.

Request for leave of absence during term-time should be submitted as early as possible and ideally at least **two weeks in advance**. Requests should be sent via email to: [attendance@michaelhall.co.uk](mailto:attendance@michaelhall.co.uk)

**Examples of authorised absences include:**

- **Illness and medical/dental appointments**
- **Religious observation** on days specifically set apart by a recognised religious body.
- **Traveller pupils** travelling for occupational purposes (e.g., Roma, Gypsies, Showman)

- **Approved sporting activities or off-site education**, with adequate safeguarding arrangements confirmed

**Authorised term-time absence will not be granted for:**

- Family holidays during term time
- Family celebrations or social events

## **5.5 Punctuality**

Punctuality is a key component of attendance.

- Pupils arriving after the register is taken but still within the 30-minute registration window will be marked as late ('L').
- Pupils arriving between **08:15am and 08:45am** will be marked as **Late ('L')** mark.
- Pupils arriving after **08:45am** without a valid justification will receive an **Unauthorised Absence mark ('U')** mark.

Repeated lateness will be monitored and will result in further intervention (if deemed necessary an attendance contract will be implemented).

X3 lates per week, or repeat...

## **5.6 Monitoring and reporting attendance**

The **Attendance and Safeguarding Officer** will monitor attendance daily, identifying trends and concerns. Attendance data will be:

- Analysed to detect patterns of absence.
- Reviewed regularly by the Attendance Champion, Senior Leadership Team and Wellbeing/Pastoral Care Team.
- Shared with relevant external agencies if safeguarding or attendance concerns arise.
- Shared with the Local Authorities on a termly basis (Attendance Returns).
- Reported timely to the **Board of Trustees** for oversight.

In cases of concerning attendance, early intervention strategies will be applied, including meetings with parents/carers and **attendance contracts** may be implemented if deemed necessary to support improvement.

Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School is committed to collaborating with parents/carers and external agencies to remove barriers to regular school attendance, ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed.

### **5.7 Supported reintegration programmes (includes any reduction or amendment to full-time education)**

At Michael Hall Steiner Waldorf School, we recognise that in very exceptional circumstances, pupils may require a temporary adjustment to their school attendance to support their reintegration into full-time education.

A **Supported Reintegration Programme** is designed to meet the pupil's individual needs and provide a pathway back to full-time education. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis but may include circumstances such as:

- A medical condition preventing full-time attendance
- Recovery following a long-term absence.

A **Supported Reintegration Programme** is a **short-term** measure and will not be treated as a long-term solution. It will be:

- **Time-limited** with regular, scheduled reviews
- Tailored to the pupil's individual needs
- Developed in collaboration with parents/ carers and relevant professionals.

## **6 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.