

St Michael's CE Primary School : Attendance Policy

This policy reflects the vision and aims of St Michael's CEP 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*
- ❖ *truancy before or during the school day*
- ❖ *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 Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Education Authority. The EWO 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 court proceedings to prosecute 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:

- ❖ Parent/guardians need to make contact with the school by 9.15am on the first day of a child's absence.
- ❖ Parents are expected to send a signed note in respect of any absence. This needs to identify clearly the reason for the absence. School is not able to accept verbal messages from other children as authorisation of an absence.
- ❖ Absences for holidays during term time will not be authorised. However if you do decide to take your child on holiday you will need to fill in a "Holiday" form available from the Reception Office.
- ❖ If a child arrives after the start of the school day then s/he has to be registered with a late mark.
- ❖ If there has been no reason given for an absence a letter will be sent asking for a reason for the child's absence.
- ❖ The school produces regular attendance reports which identify irregular or persistent absence, lateness and holidays taken. These are shared with the EWO and the Attendance Team at County Hall.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiative.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Attendance target for 2008/2009 was 95.3%. The school achieved 95.1%.

From September 2009 we are starting the "Cool Cats" initiative, which encourages all children to improve their attendance. The class with the best attendance during any one week will look after The Cool Cat! Other incentives include the award of a certificate for 100% attendance over the period of one term, as well as stickers for the most improved attendance.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- ❖ Mrs A Bristow (Secretary/Bursar) and Mr J Greenway (Headteacher)

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.