

Michael Hall

a Steiner Waldorf School

Attendance Policy

Policy Owner	Director of Operations
Formally endorsed by	Council of Trustees
Endorsement Date	August 2018
Next Review Date	August 2020

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. We do all we can to encourage all children to attend and be punctual. 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 safe, happy and rewarding place of learning.

Parents are asked to ensure that pupils arrive in school on time. 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 8.30am.

The law requires that children of compulsory school age (see below) must attend regular full time schooling and that we complete a daily attendance register for the morning and afternoon session that shows whether the pupil has an authorised or unauthorised absence. We consider that children should achieve 95% attendance.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) 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.

The School monitors absences on a regular basis and a termly report is given to SLT and the Trustees.

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 School can authorise an absence and not all absences will be classified as authorised. The Compliance Officer is responsible for providing authorisation for absences. Please note that authorised absence still counts towards your child's overall attendance figures.

Unauthorised absence

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

Compulsory School age

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.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) Nov 2016 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](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016](#)
- [Children Missing in Education September 2016](#)

This policy complies with our Parental Contract.

School Procedures

Attendance register

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

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and after lunch

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

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 08:30am or as soon as practically possible. This can be done by calling Reception, 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.

Medical or dental appointments

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.

Applications for other types of absence, such as Leave of Absence in term time must also be made in advance by emailing firstaid@michaelhall.co.uk or by contacting the First Aid room. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (before 08:30) using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent (after 08:30) using the appropriate code.

Following up absences

The School will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, identify whether the absence is approved or not. Should there be a Safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding team will be notified to assess what assistance / action is required.

Reporting to parents

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

Authorised and unauthorised absence

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 School considers 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 school's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** 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 cannot be granted for

- Term time holidays
- Family celebrations

Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a half termly basis.

If a pupil's absence goes above 7 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

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%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

In the event of high levels of absenteeism which is considered to be 80% or lower, and in the absence of exceptional circumstances, a decision may be taken by the school that we cannot ensure that we can appropriately educate the pupil, who will then be removed from the school roll.

School Refusers

In the event of a child becoming a school refuser, the Attendance Officer and the Wellbeing & Pastoral Care team 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.

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 (KCSIE 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.

Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Educational Management Team to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Director of Operations

The Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Trustees.

The Monitoring Team

The Compliance Officer analyses attendance data at the School and individual pupil level.

Concerns about attendance are reported to the Attendance Officer who works with the Wellbeing & Pastoral Care Team to tackle persistent absence and arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

Class Teachers and Guardians

Class Teachers and Guardian are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes where known. Different areas of the school follow different procedures as detailed below

Kindergarten - Keep paper registers and the date is transferred to the online registration module of the school management system as soon as is possible during their morning session.

Lower School - Keep paper registers, these are collected daily and entered in the online registration module of the School Management System by the reception staff.

Middle School - Class Teachers enter the registrations directly into the online registration module of the School Management System using the computers provided in their classrooms.

Upper School - Guardians enter the registrations directly into the online registration module of the School Management System using tablets provided.

Reception staff

Reception staff enter all reported absences on the School Management System and transfer the data from the paper registers to the online registration module for the Lower School.

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Policy issue date: 24/09/19