



# Aughton St. Michael's C.E. School

## Whole School Attendance Policy

Policy reviewed by: F. Cottam  
Date: September 2020  
Review Date: September 2021

### Mission Statement

**A**chieving all we can to develop fully our hearts and minds.  
**S**haring in a loving, caring, Christian community.  
**M**aking sure everyone is valued.

### Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Give you details on attendance as required but also on a termly basis;
- Reward good attendance through certificates;
- Carry out transition work with pupils moving between their nursery/ pre-school and reception, and before leaving for high school;
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors;
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription or appointment card or similar.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10% or more** of their schooling across the school year unless it is because of a long term illness. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly, **therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately.**

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the Headteacher, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If a child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to Reception

#### **If a child is absent, we will:**

- Where school have received no phone call explaining the absence then school will telephone parents to ascertain why the child is absent;
- If absence persists, parents will be invited into school to discuss the situation;
- The school may, if it deems it necessary, refer the matter to the Local Authority School Attendance Team, as per Local Authority protocol.

## **Telephone Numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure school always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## **In school strategies to improve attendance/ punctuality (see appendix):**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. Where there is concern over a child's attendance school may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

This includes:

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils and the Headteacher;
- Parenting contracts;
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority School Attendance Team);
- Attendance panels;
- Penalty notices.

## **The Local Authority Attendance Team:**

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST). They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist the case may be referred to the Court Officers, who can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

## **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect your child to be lined up on the playground at this time. During COVID restrictions, the timings of the school day will be start between 8:45 am and 9:00 am.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30 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, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Leave in Term Time:**

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

**There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.**

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office or downloaded from our School's website. **Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional.**

It is important that you understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:

When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. SATs or any other public examinations.

- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the school's target or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed. The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

### **Religious Absence:**

The school will authorise one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.

### **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.

The Local Authority's procedures for CME are currently being updated in line with national guidance. Contact Lancashire CME for further advice on <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/education/children-missing-education.aspx>

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. Schools must place pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.

School ensure that the admission register is accurate and kept up to date. School regularly encourages parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur. This can assist the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

School must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Where a parent notifies a school that a pupil will live at another address, school are required to record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address;
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, school must record in the admission register:

- the name of the new school;
- the date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

School is required to notify the local authority **within five days** when a pupil's name is added to the admission register. School will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are registered at the start of the school's youngest year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> School must also notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register **under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.** This duty does not apply where the pupil has completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries. Advice on carrying out reasonable enquiries can be found in the [Children Missing Education](#) guidance.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

School works with the local authority by agreeing to methods of making returns. When making returns, the school should highlight to the local authority where they have been unable to obtain the necessary information from the parent, for example in cases where the child's

destination school or address is unknown. School also considers whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns.

School must comply with these duties, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be at risk of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of being harmed, exploited or radicalised.

### **Expectations of Attendance during COVID 19 restrictions.**

All children will be expected to attend school regularly from September 2020 onwards ( unless they have been otherwise advised by their medical team ).

Any child displaying symptoms of COVID must remain at home and be tested for the virus as soon as possible. Where the test comes back negative the child must return to school when their symptoms have eased. Any child who tests positive must remain at home for 10 days, until their symptoms have cleared.

School must be informed immediately where a child has tested positive for COVID

Where children have been advised to self- isolate, school must be informed immediately.