



## **St Michael's CE (VA) Primary School**

### **Lyme Regis**

**Learners growing together with God**

**Children's' values - Respect, Koinonia, Perseverance,  
Generosity, Thankfulness.**

### **A whole school policy on Attendance**

<b>Adopted by the Governing Body On:</b>	<b>11th April 2015</b>
<b>Signature of Headteacher:</b>	<b>N Kiddle</b>
<b>Signature of Governing Body:</b>	<b>M Ellis</b>
<b>Date ratified by Governing Body:</b>	<b>13th March 2017</b>
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	<b>2 years</b>

## **Statement of Safeguarding Children**

At St. Michael's CE VA Primary School, we have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils. The Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy indicates some of the processes and procedures by which children who are at risk are identified and what actions the school will take on identifying a child who is considered 'at risk'. All staff, including our volunteers and supply staff must ensure they are aware of our Procedures. Parents and carers are also encouraged to make themselves familiar with the school safeguarding policies.

When there are concerns about a child's welfare, we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies. Unless we have good reason to believe this is not in the child's best interest, we will always ensure our concerns about our pupils are discussed with their parents/carers first.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Annabelle Grose, Headteacher.

### **Aim**

Our aim is to ensure that, wherever possible, children are at school, on time, every day that the school is open.

### **Background**

Regular attendance enhances pupil progress. In contrast, significant absence will undermine learning and regardless of ability or effort a pupil will fail to achieve expected progress.

The national attendance target is 95%. The Dorset LA currently set a target of 95.2%. Attendance is defined as timely presence at sessions (each day consisting of a morning and an afternoon session) recorded in Class Registers. The school year is 190 days (380 sessions). An absence of 10 days in any given academic year equates to 5.2% and means a pupil will not attain minimum expected attendance.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended with effect from 1 September 2013 removed all reference to family holiday, extended leave and 10 school days' absence thresholds previously published.

### **Absences**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an acceptable reason, such as illness, or any other unavoidable cause.

Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following types of absence:

- Genuine illness (which can be evidenced if seen as regular or prolonged)
- Unavoidable medical appointments (Parents are encouraged and expected to try to make medical appointments at the beginning of the school day or after school if possible.)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement of a person closely involved in a child's life
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces during a long-term deployment
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been sought or granted. These may be absences where the parents keep the child out of school unnecessarily, absences which have never been properly explained, children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register and truancy before or during the school day.

### **Frequent absence**

It is the responsibility of all staff to bring to the attention of the Headteacher any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a child begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will endeavour to resolve the problem with the parents/carers.

The school will seek advice from the Local Authority as appropriate via the School Attendance Manager within Learning and Inclusion. Support for families and the school, will be available from Attendance Support Officers via a referral to the Integrated Duty Team.

## **P r o c e d u r e s**

If a child has a pattern of absence, concerning reasons for absence or long term absence, the class teacher will talk to the parents in the first instance. If a child has less than 90% attendance over a half term, a letter will be sent to the parents to ensure that they are aware that the absence has become a concern. This will be sent even if the school are aware of illness as it is important that the actual percentage is known by parents.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% or is below 90% over more than one half term for any reason, then parents will be invited to a meeting to see if anything can be done to help. If, following the meeting attendance does not improve to 95% a referral for support will be made.

This should be seen as positive as all parents and teachers want the children to be happy and well enough to attend school on a regular basis.

The Local Authority Attendance Manager is responsible for ensuring that the local authority's duties concerning school attendance are fulfilled, particularly in relation to:

- The issuing of penalty notices,
- The application for education supervision orders, and parental prosecutions.

These duties are set out in *School attendance parental responsibility measures – Statutory Guidance January 2015*.

### **Information for Parents/Carers**

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in fit condition to learn.

If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents must notify the school as soon as possible by phone or in person on the first day of absence.

### **First day absence**

On the first day of a child's absence from school, parents are asked to contact the school before 9.30am on 01297 442623 or speak directly to a member of the office staff. If a message hasn't been received by 10.00am, the school will contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence. The parent should then contact the school daily to inform that the child is still ill if the absence is longer than one day. A letter detailing the reason for absence should be delivered on the child's return.

A pupil's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received. If any child is absent, and the school has not received any message regarding the absence, the school will attempt to contact the parents/guardian of the child by phone by morning break as a way of ensuring that the child is safe.

Attendance issues will be raised with parents through Parents' evenings, school prospectus, newsletter and a letter prior to commencing school.

Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns the school has about attendance and given the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff.

Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered support and parents will be contacted by the Headteacher.

### **Medical Evidence for Persistent Absence**

Where there is significant absence about minor illness e.g. coughs, colds, headaches etc the parents should be required to provide evidence e.g. appointment cards. In these circumstances, an appointment with the school nurse may be offered who will be able to advise on recurring ailments as it is important these are addressed and pupils attend school as much as possible.

The school will happily administer medicine prescribed by a doctor to ensure that a child can attend school if they are feeling well even when needing to take medication. Doctors will be happy to prescribe pain relief if they feel that a child needs it to enable them to attend school regularly.

## **Pupils**

- All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Lateness will be recorded in the register, but any child arriving after the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised absence (dependant on circumstances e.g. dentist, hospital). All late arrivals are required to report to the school office, including the record of minutes late.
- Attendance will be monitored using individual attendance records/ SIMs
- Pupils should be aware that bullying will not be tolerated but also if they find they are being bullied they know how to get support.

## **Governors**

- Attendance will be monitored by the Staffing and Safeguarding Committee and reported to the Full Governing Body.
- The school's policy will be ratified by the Governing Body.
- An explanation of hierarchy of actions the school takes in the event of absence, including Penalty Notices.

## **Data Analysis**

- Data analysis plays a central role in all school and there will be procedures and systems for gathering the analysing absence data.
- Issues with any classes or year groups.
- Attendance patterns of children in care.
- Number of children with short but sporadic absences.
- Comparing data with school that siblings may attend.

## **Punctuality**

The Key Stage One Staff will be involved in greeting and meeting children and their families in the mornings. Children who arrive late after the gate to the left-hand side of the school has closed must go to the main entrance of the school to be signed in by the parent who has brought them to school. Only children who have permission to walk to and from school independently will be signed in by a school adult. Children may have a genuine reason; appropriate follow-ups may be required with children/parents/carers and staff.

The school gate opens at 8.50am and will close at 8.55am. Children will be in class being registered at 9.00am ready to start lessons at 9.05am.

Children can be marked as late before registration closes or late after registration closes. Children who are late after registration closes will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

Registers are marked again at 1pm each day and all children are expected to be in attendance.

A pattern of poor punctuality will firstly be discussed with the parent and if the difficulty continues, a referral for support will be made.

## **Holidays in term time**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold 10 school days. The amendments make it clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- There is no right to remove a child from school for reason of holiday. An absence can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and the parent must make a case for taking a child away from school. The regulations mean that:
- Parents cannot demand a leave of absence as an automatic right. Requests must be made in advance.
- Schools cannot apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications. All requests must be considered on their own merits.
- Extended periods of absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.
- The Head Teacher, on behalf of the Governing Body, will authorise/unauthorise a leave of absence.
- Absence which has not been agreed in advance will lead to the pupil being marked with 'unauthorised absence'.

- Parents could be issued with a Penalty Notice if they take unauthorised absence in relation to taking a holiday in term time.

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

The Government has placed a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by suitable we mean efficient full time education suitable for her/his age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs the child may have. The duty does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly.

These children are referred to as Children Missing Education. Children are identified as missing from education when they are of compulsory school age and are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time.
- Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:
  - They do not start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the education system.
  - They are removed from school by their parents.
  - They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area.
  - The family move home regularly.

The school will contact the local authority for advice when they feel that a child may be missing in education. A formal referral will be made on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the child not being in school.

### **Children with Medical Needs**

#### **Long-term health conditions – provision at home or hospital**

Children or young people who are unable to attend school because of long term or recurring health conditions or mental health issues, should have a personal (or individual) education / learning plan. Their social needs should be taken into account and where possible links will be made with their school to facilitate continued social contact with peers.

Where absences are expected to last for more than 15 working days and involve a physical, psychological or mental health condition or other specific conditions, the school will either seek the advice of the Community Paediatrician, Hospital Consultant, CAMHS, or request the involvement of a Locality Social Worker. The Consultant will be asked to:

- confirm the child or young person's health condition (or mental health), and advise on what action is being taken in addressing the condition;
- indicate whether the child or young person's absence is likely to last for more than 15 working days;
- comment on the child or young person's ability to cope with educational provision, and provide guidance upon the amount provision that is appropriate;
- comment on whether the illness is chronic and likely to recur necessitating future support from the Early Intervention Services Team, thus negating the need to reapply for support inside a specified timeframe;
- Indicate the treatment or support that the child or young person is to receive that will support their return to health and full time attendance at school.

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### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child attends. St. Michael's CE VA Primary School is committed to working with parents in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. We have a collective responsibility to ensure our children are here every day.