Michaelchurch Escley Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Contents

1. Aims 2
2. Legislation and guidance 2
3. Roles and responsibilities 3
4. Recording attendance 5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence 7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance 9
7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school 10
8. Attendance monitoring 10
9. CME 11
10. Mental Health, SEND and Vulnerable Pupils 11
11. Attendance Contracts and Notice to Improve 11
12. Monitoring arrangements 11
13. Links with other policies 12
Appendix 1: attendance codes 13

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1. Aims

Michaelchurch Escley Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

We recognise that attendance is everyone's responsibility and that school, families, pupils and external agencies must work together to overcome barriers to attendance. Excellent attendance supports safeguarding, wellbeing, attainment and future success.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility

measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Equality Act 2010
- It also refers to:
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The Link Governor for attendance: XXXXXXXX

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Where necessary, make a referral to the enforcement team at Herefordshire Council
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader 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 followed by all 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 intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Louise Crocker and can be contacted via admin@michaelchurch-escley.hereford.sch.uk

3.4 The school attendance officer

The school is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

The local authority attendance officer is Sam Lait who supports our school and can be contacted via: schoolattendanceengagement@herefordshire.gov.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 Schol admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the head or class teacher where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 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 they are 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 them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting: Louise Crocker.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:45 and ends at 3:15.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will close at 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:55 and will be close at 13:05.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school, either by phone or email of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school admin staff.

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.

Where an absence exceeds five school days, or where there are reasonable concerns about the authenticity of the illness, the school may request medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate documentation. The school will not request 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.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- A pupil who is persistently late: If the matter is not resolved promptly, a meeting will be arranged with parents to agree strategies for resolving the issue. A review period will be established to monitor

progress. If insufficient improvement is seen, further meetings will be held to consider additional actions. Persistent concerns may be escalated to a governor for review and discussion of next steps.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- contact a parent/carer on the first day of any unexplained absence. Where no contact can be made and there are safeguarding concerns, the school will take reasonable steps to establish the pupil's whereabouts as soon as practicable. This may include contacting emergency contacts and, where appropriate, undertaking a home visit. If the school remains unable to establish the pupil's safety or whereabouts, the matter may be referred to the police and/or other relevant agencies on the same day
- Preschool absence will be followed up in the same way as school absence above
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school, with the support of the local authority, will consider options such as: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via an auto generated emails every half term (apart from the final Summer 2 half term when the attendance information is in the pupil's end of year report).

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as; a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion; a family bereavement for a limited period; a music examination

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or admin office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Please see Herefordshire Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for full details:

Microsoft Word - Penalty Notice - Local Code of Conduct 2024

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Michaelchurch, our main strategy for promoting high attendance is to create an ethos and environment where children want to come to school.

Other strategies used:

- A celebratory email to the school community on days where the whole school is present.
- Every half term, during Gold Award assembly, a celebration for the class that has the highest attendance (not including Year R),
- Every half term, a reward given to the class with the best improvement to their class attendance (e.g. extra playtime and certificate in their class for the half term)
- attendance discussed at parent's meetings

- attendance expectations shared through newsletters and website

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Our approach to pupils with complex attendance barriers involves early identification, close family collaboration, and individualised support. We maintain open, non-judgmental communication with parents, offering home visits and referrals to external services. In-school, we provide personalised interventions like nurture groups, learning support, and mental health counselling to address social, emotional, or academic challenges. We create a welcoming, safe environment and engage pupils through extracurricular activities. Working closely with multi-agency teams, we regularly monitor progress and adjust strategies to ensure each pupil overcomes their barriers and stays engaged in their education.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

For pupils absent due to ill health or SEND, we collaborate closely with families, maintaining open communication and offering tailored support. We develop individualised plans, including part-time timetables or phased returns, and provide home learning resources when needed. In-school adjustments include tailored learning support, adapted environments, and access to mental health services or SEND specialists. We offer one-on-one or small group interventions, and ensure regular multi-agency collaboration with health professionals, therapists, and social services. Our goal is to support the pupil's well-being and reintegrate them into school life at a pace that suits their needs.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil’s needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

After a lengthy absence, we support pupils' reintegration by creating a personalised, phased return plan, working closely with families. We provide emotional and academic support through pastoral care, catch-up sessions, and, if necessary, flexible timetables. Regular monitoring ensures progress, and peer support or mentoring fosters a smooth, positive transition back into school life.

8. Attendance monitoring

The school will use attendance data proactively to identify pupils and groups whose attendance is causing concern or is at risk of decline. Attendance information will be analysed regularly by the Attendance Lead to identify patterns, trends and barriers to attendance.

The school will monitor:

- Individual pupil attendance.
- Persistent absence (attendance below 90%).
- Severe absence.
- Attendance of vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, children looked after and those known to social care.
- Patterns of absence, including repeated illness, lateness and absence on particular days.

Attendance data will be used to ensure that support is targeted effectively and proportionately. Interventions will be determined according to the level of need and may include early discussions with parents/carers, attendance support plans, pastoral support, reasonable adjustments, referrals to external agencies and formal attendance procedures where appropriate.

The impact of interventions will be reviewed regularly through ongoing analysis of attendance data to ensure that support is effective and that attendance improves over time. Governors will receive regular attendance reports to enable effective monitoring, challenge and strategic oversight.

8.1 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Reducing persistent absence (below 90% attendance) and severe absence is a key priority for the school. Where attendance concerns are identified, the school will work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, the local authority and other relevant agencies to understand and remove barriers to attendance. Support will be tailored to individual circumstances and may include attendance meetings, pastoral support, family support and referrals to external services. Formal attendance procedures and legal interventions may be considered where appropriate and in line with statutory guidance.

9. CME

Children Missing Education procedures will be followed when pupils cannot be located, fail to attend regularly or are removed from roll. Michaelchurch Escley will notify the Local Authority where required and complete appropriate safeguarding enquiries.

Where extensive support has not secured attendance, referral to the CMIE process may be considered.

10. Mental Health, SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that pupils with SEND, medical needs, mental health needs or other vulnerabilities may face additional barriers to attendance. Attendance concerns will be considered on an individual basis, with reasonable adjustments and coordinated support provided where required. The school will work closely with families and external agencies to identify and remove barriers to attendance wherever possible. Michaelchurch Escley will follow the Herefordshire Graduated Approach to Attendance and meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

11. Attendance Contracts and Notice to Improve

Attendance contracts may be used. Notices to Improve may be issued where support has not led to sufficient improvement and statutory criteria are met.

Attendance contract

We may use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parents (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the Herefordshire.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Louise Crocker.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Attendance - A guide for Parents/Carers

1. When does my child need to be in School?

We ring the bell at 8:45am. Please ensure your child is in school before this. Ideally, they should not arrive before 8:30am, unless they are brought to school by the county mini-bus which may arrive earlier. The afternoon school session starts at 12:45pm.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Pupils who arrive after the bell has rung should report to the school office. If a pupil arrives after 8:45am but before 9:15am they will receive a late mark and the minutes late will be recorded.

If a pupil arrives after the register closes at 9:15am they will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation is received.

3. Is my child too ill for school?

At Michaelchurch, we recognise children cannot help being ill at times, and of course we don't expect them to be in school if they are too ill to learn. There are times when you may be unsure about sending your child in and on these occasions, we would encourage you to send them in, with the knowledge that we will keep a special eye on them and let you know if there's any change.

Here are a couple of useful websites to help you decide if your child should stay at home:

https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Yourchildatschool/Pages/Illness.aspx

https://patient.info/health/school-exclusion-for-infections

4. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

Parents must telephone the school on the first day of absence, wherever possible by 9:00am, or report to the school office with a specific reason why your child is not able to attend school (e.g. "they are poorly" is not satisfactory).

If the school does not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, the school office will phone you for further details. If the school is still not satisfied or is not able to get hold of you, the absence will not authorised. The telephone call will be logged and the reason for absence recorded.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

Where a child is absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more at the agreed intervals, it is the school's legal responsibility to inform the council.

5. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness. However persistent illness without medical evidence will not be authorised: After more than 5 days illness parents will be expected to grant permission for the school to consult the medical practitioner concerned.
- Emergency dental/medical appointment. (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays).
- Day of religious observance.
- Family bereavement.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. An 'Exceptional Leave of Absence Request Form' is on the school website. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

6. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

7. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission in writing to the Headteacher in advance. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission and is likely to do so.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he or she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his or her education.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

10. What happens when the national threshold (10 sessions/5 days) of unauthorised absence has been met?

The school is required to make a referral to the enforcement team at Herefordshire Council.

The Enforcement Team will consider penalty notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period. These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

Per Parent, per child Penalty notice fines may be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for unauthorised absences, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines