



Attendance - A guide for Parents

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 9:00am they will receive a late mark and the minutes late will be recorded.

If a pupil arrives after the register closes at 9:00am 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 be 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 must 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