



ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS POLICY

NOVEMBER 2022

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Michael Faraday Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Michael Faraday Primary School.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent, preferably by 8.30 am. Please inform the school by email absence@michaelfaraday.southwark.sch.uk. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe. Parents must ensure that contact details are up to date and that a minimum of 2 emergency contacts are provided.

If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the school then, as part of our safeguarding policy:

- The school office will send a text reminding them to make contact
- If there is no response to the text, the office will try to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts. The purpose of this is to check on the safety of the child
- If it has not been possible to contact either the parent/carers or emergency contacts the school will give due consideration to making a home visit based on their knowledge of the child. If no contact has been made after 3 days, then a home visit will definitely be made. (See the section 'Children Missing in Education').

Pupils are expected to arrive by 9.00 am when a bell will ring in the playground, after this the school gate will be closed. If children arrive after this time, they must go to the school office to be signed in. Parents or carers are asked to contact the school if they are experiencing difficulties getting their child to school.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL STAFF

The headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance and has to report termly percentages to the local authority. The deputy head monitors attendance daily.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present or mark as an 'N' if a child is absent. The office staff will mark in late or absent children in the morning and telephone or text the parents of any absent children if they have not already made contact. It is the responsibility of office staff to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence. If no reason is provided, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' 2 weeks following the absence.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- When a reason has been provided, the office staff ensure that the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes – see appendix 2)
- Only the office staff and the Deputy Head can change attendance codes (e.g. changing N to O), that member of staff will date, initial and give a brief reason for the change.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

When a child is unwell, parents are expected to contact the school before 8.30 am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

An appointment card or verification by the doctors/ dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments

If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If a child is absent due to vomiting and/or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

For more than three days of absence or where there is repeated absence due to illness, the school will request medical evidence (this can take the form of an appointment card or a copy of a prescription)

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance (particularly when it drops below 90%) the school will request medical evidence for any absence

MOVING SCHOOL

If a family are moving out of the area there are a number of things we require them to do:

- Notify us in writing at least 2 weeks in advance, including contact details for where they are moving to and if possible the details of the school their child will be attending
- Notify us in writing when the child has started their new school

We will also

- Request an email from the new school to confirm when the child started regardless of the country the new school is in.
- If we do not hear from the family about their child's new school, we will contact the local authority where they have moved to find out whether the child is in school. If they are on the waiting list or have started school, we will request a confirmation email and off roll the child after one week following this confirmation.
- Failure to do this will result in the school contacting Children Missing from Education (CME) If a child has been absent from school for 2 weeks with no reason given, or if they have moved and no new school has contacted Michael Faraday, a referral is made to the CME team.

LATENESS

At Michael Faraday Primary School, the register is taken at 9.00 am and 1.00 pm (Reception – Year 2) or 1.15 pm (Year 3 – Year 6). Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to the office staff who will record their name and reason for lateness. The pupil will be marked as late when registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:05 am and 1.05 pm (Reception and KS1) or 1.20 pm (KS2). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'L'), pupils arriving after 9.30 am will be marked as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.

Parents will be contacted by the school if their child is late regularly. If punctuality continues to be a concern the Deputy Headteacher will meet with parents to discuss any issues which are causing lateness and how things can be improved.

Please note that persistent lateness after 9.30, when children are marked as 'U' may result in the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice warning.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

A written application must be made to request a leave of absence, the headteacher will give due consideration to the circumstances and the child's past attendance history. The application for leave of absence must include a return date. Children who return 10 days or more after the expected date will be reported to the local authority as a 'Child Missing in Education' and may be taken off the school roll.

Where leave has been granted this will be marked 'C' in the register, where a family request leave and it is not granted this will be marked as 'G'. Unauthorised holiday of 10 sessions (5 days) or more can result in the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays
- Absence of child as a result of another member of the family's illness or medical appointment

MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS

Our expectation is that a child's attendance is 96% or above at the end of the school year. The school closely monitors attendance and lateness to try to minimise poor attendance and punctuality through:

- Staff speaking to parents and carers as and when concerns arise
- The Deputy Headteacher contacting families whose attendance is below average to try to find ways to improve
- The Deputy writing to parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve

The school monitors children's attendance when it drops below 96%. A series of letters is sent when attendance does not improve, approaches or drops below 92%

Letter 1 – advising parent or carer that attendance is low and requesting medical evidence if appropriate

Letter 2 – raising concerns that attendance has not improved and setting the expectation that all future absences need to be accompanied by medical evidence. This may be accompanied by a telephone call from Deputy Headteacher

Letter 3 – either a meeting with Deputy Head to review attendance or an attendance panel meeting with the LA Attendance and Welfare Officer


What your child's attendance percentage means

Attendance Levels

CHILD'S ATTENDANCE	ACTION
96%+	Excellent attendance
94 – 95%	Good Well done – strive to build on this
Below 95%	Causing concern Children's attendance is below average and they will be missing out on what other children are learning and doing. Parents need to work closely with the school to improve the situation. The children's attendance will be carefully monitored and families written to whenever there is a broken week. Contact will be made by DHT if attendance does not improve.
Below 90%	Possible penalty notice/legal proceedings Any child whose attendance falls below 92% is regarded nationally as a child who has persistent absence. The Government is very concerned with this and has invested heavily to monitor the attendance of these children. Schools have targets to reduce the levels of persistent absence and the school and local authority work closely with families to support them in getting their child to school each day. However, if a child's attendance does not improve next steps may include a penalty notice and possible legal proceedings and a referral to Children's services.

Other policies to refer to

- Michael Faraday Safeguarding Policy
- Michael Faraday End of Day Policy

Agreed by the Governing Body on	8 November 2022
Signed (Chair)	
Review Date	Autumn 2025

Appendix 1

Protocol for contacting parents or carers of children absent from school

For the purpose of this document the term parents also cover carers

It is the school's expectation that parents* contact the school before the start of the day if their child is going to be absent

When they call the school regarding illness, parents are asked to say when they expect their child to return to school (for example in cases of vomiting or diarrhoea the child will return after 48 hours). If the child is still unwell after this time the parent must contact the school again

It is school policy that if a child is off for more than 3 days then medical evidence must be provided in order to authorise the absence

If a parent does not contact school when their child is absent the school will send a text asking them to do so

If a parent does not respond to the text, then a phone call will be made to the parent before lunch time

If it is not possible to contact the parent, then the office will phone the emergency contact numbers provided

If it has not been possible to ascertain the child's whereabouts after all these avenues have been explored then a home visit will be undertaken by the school within a maximum of 3 days. If there is no response from the home, then the school may contact the police (advice will be sought from the Local Authority)

Appendix 2: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

Register Attendance Codes

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
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
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
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
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