

ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2026

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- 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

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

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/timetabled session] on time
- Email the school to report their child's absence before 9am, preferably by 8.30am, on the day of the absence (and advise when they are expected to return). Emails should be sent to absence@michaelfaraday.southwark.sch.uk.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. If the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible.
- 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 Sarah Haley, Deputy Headteacher, who can be contacted via the school office on 02077035806 or info@michaelfaraday.southwark.sch.uk

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL STAFF

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
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the deputy headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers 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/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

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 in line with the 'Children Missing Education' statutory guidance. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f5e4a40f0b6230268f135/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

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

In addition, the school shares daily attendance data with the DfE and the Local Authority. The aim of this is to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence and provide targeted interventions.

What your child's attendance percentage means

Attendance Levels

CHILD'S ATTENDANCE	ACTION
96%+	Excellent attendance
95 – 96%	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

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

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause