



Attendance Policy

2026–2027

Learning our faith. Living our faith. Loving our faith.

St. Michael & St. Martin school follows the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, in its daily life through celebration of the Liturgy and through following the values taught in the Gospel of Jesus, by:

Learning our faith.

Living our faith.

Loving our faith.

Thus the school recognises the dignity of every human person because s/he is a child of God, while fostering awareness of the world's poor. Equality of opportunity for every person is therefore paramount and precludes all forms of discrimination on grounds of colour, gender, race, social class or ability.

The school aims to nurture the spiritual, intellectual and physical growth of each pupil through a holistic approach, which takes due note of the needs of every child while, at the same time, striving for excellence in all aspects of education in a secure environment.

Policy owner	Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion
Approved by	Governing Body
Approval date	October 2026
Review date	September 2027, or earlier if statutory guidance changes
Key guidance	DfE: Working together to improve school attendance (updated July 2026)

1. Purpose and principles

Excellent attendance is central to pupils' attainment, wellbeing, safeguarding and sense of belonging. At St Michael & St Martin Catholic Primary School, we want every child to benefit fully from the education, relationships and opportunities provided by the school. We therefore promote high attendance and punctuality while working respectfully and constructively with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance.

This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, including the July 2026 update, and should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, behaviour, SEND, supporting pupils with medical conditions and children missing education procedures.

2. Aims

- Promote a culture in which good attendance and punctuality are valued by pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Set clear expectations for pupils and parents and explain how absence should be reported.

- Identify emerging attendance concerns early and provide appropriate support.
- Use attendance information to identify patterns, vulnerable pupils and groups requiring additional support.
- Work with the London Borough of Hounslow and other agencies where barriers cannot be resolved by the school alone.
- Use legal intervention only where appropriate and in accordance with statutory guidance and the local authority code of conduct.
- Ensure attendance practice is fair, consistent, safeguarding-focused and mindful of duties under the Equality Act 2010 and SEND legislation.

3. Responsibilities

The Governing Body

- Recognises improving attendance as a school leadership responsibility and provides appropriate support and challenge.
- Ensures the school has an attendance policy consistent with statutory guidance and that it is published and regularly communicated.
- Reviews attendance information, including persistent and severe absence and attendance of relevant pupil groups.
- Ensures school leaders have appropriate training and resources to fulfil attendance responsibilities.

The Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion

- Provides strategic leadership for attendance and promotes high expectations across the school.
- Oversees the implementation and regular review of this policy.
- Ensures attendance data is monitored systematically and that appropriate support and intervention are put in place.
- Works with families, the local authority and partner agencies where additional support or formal intervention is required.
- Ensures attendance concerns are considered alongside safeguarding and SEND information.

School staff

- Complete registers accurately and promptly using the prescribed attendance and absence codes.
- Promote the importance of attendance and punctuality and build positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Pass attendance and safeguarding concerns promptly to the appropriate senior member of staff.
- Follow agreed first-day absence and follow-up procedures.

Parents and carers

- Ensure their child attends school every day the school is open to them, unless an absence has been authorised or the child is unable to attend.
- Ensure their child arrives on time and ready to learn.
- Notify the school as soon as possible on each day of unexpected absence, giving the reason for absence.
- Provide information reasonably requested by the school and keep contact details up to date.
- Work with the school and other agencies to address barriers to attendance and attend meetings when requested.
- Avoid arranging appointments and other commitments during the school day wherever reasonably possible.

4. The school day and punctuality

The school gates open at 8:35am and closed at 8.55am. Pupils are expected to arrive promptly so that they are ready for the start of the school day. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The school will communicate the precise registration and register-closing times to parents and will apply the statutory attendance codes accordingly.

Late arrival disrupts learning and may indicate an emerging attendance concern. The school will monitor repeated lateness and work with families to improve punctuality. Arrival after the register has closed without an acceptable reason will be recorded as unauthorised absence for that session.

5. Reporting absence

Parents must contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of an unexpected absence and should continue to provide information for subsequent days as requested. Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will make reasonable efforts to contact the parent and establish the reason for absence. Where contact cannot be made, or where the circumstances give rise to concern, safeguarding procedures will be followed and the school may contact other agencies.

The school decides whether an absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised in accordance with the statutory registration regulations and DfE guidance.

6. Illness and medical appointments

Pupils who are too unwell to attend school should remain at home. Parents should provide the reason for illness when reporting the absence. The school will not routinely request medical evidence for every illness; however, where there are genuine and reasonable concerns about the authenticity or frequency of illness, the school may seek appropriate evidence or discuss additional support with the family.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever possible. Where an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment where practicable. The school will request confirmation of the appointment.

7. Leave of absence and holidays in term time

Headteachers may grant a leave of absence during term time only where exceptional circumstances exist. There is no entitlement to a holiday during term time. Parents should submit requests in advance and provide sufficient information for the Headteacher to consider the individual circumstances.

Each request will be considered individually. The Headteacher will determine whether exceptional circumstances exist and, if leave is granted, the number of school days authorised. Unauthorised leave may result in referral to the local authority for consideration of a penalty notice or other legal action in accordance with the National Framework and Hounslow's code of conduct.

8. Attendance monitoring and early intervention

Attendance is monitored regularly at individual, group and whole-school level. The school will look beyond a single percentage and consider patterns, the number of days or sessions missed, reasons for absence, punctuality, previous attendance and relevant contextual information.

Where attendance begins to cause concern, the school will seek to understand the barriers affecting the pupil and family. Actions may include discussion with the pupil and parent, written communication, an attendance meeting, agreed targets, reasonable adjustments, pastoral or SEND support, an attendance plan, or referral to appropriate services.

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence is absence of 50% or more. Pupils approaching or meeting these levels will receive particular attention, with support tailored to their circumstances and safeguarding needs.

9. Pupils with SEND, medical conditions or other vulnerabilities

The school will maintain high expectations for the attendance of all pupils while recognising that some pupils face additional barriers because of disability, SEND, medical conditions, mental health needs, family circumstances or other vulnerabilities. Attendance action will be considered in the context of the individual pupil's needs and the school's duties, including reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, attendance concerns will be considered alongside the provision specified in the plan and, where appropriate, through the annual review process. Where a pupil has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable, the school will work with relevant professionals and will respond promptly to unexplained or concerning absence.

10. Children missing education and safeguarding

Absence can be a safeguarding warning sign. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures where absence gives rise to concern. The school will make required attendance and sickness returns and will notify the local authority of relevant admissions and deletions from the admission register in accordance with statutory requirements.

A pupil will not be removed from the admission register simply because they have poor attendance or because their whereabouts are uncertain. Any deletion from roll will be made only where a prescribed statutory ground applies and required enquiries and notifications have been completed.

11. Support first approach

The school will generally seek to understand and address barriers to attendance before moving to legal intervention where support is appropriate. Support may be provided by the school, the local authority or other services. Parents are expected to engage with offered support and agreed actions.

Where voluntary support has not been successful or has not been engaged with, the school and local authority may consider formal attendance measures. The appropriate response will depend on the circumstances of the individual case.

12. Penalty notices and legal intervention

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions do not have to be consecutive and may arise from different types of unauthorised absence. Reaching the threshold does not mean that a penalty notice is automatic; the circumstances of the individual case and whether support is appropriate must be considered.

Where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve may be used before a penalty notice. Where support is not appropriate—for example, an unauthorised term-time holiday—a penalty notice may be considered without a Notice to Improve, subject to the statutory framework and local authority code.

Under the national framework, a first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period is £160 with no reduced rate. A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a rolling three-year period; where the national threshold is met again, other legal action may be considered.

Penalty notices and prosecutions are legal measures and will be considered in partnership with the London Borough of Hounslow and in accordance with its current code of conduct.

13. Attendance communication with parents

The school will communicate attendance expectations clearly and regularly. Where concerns arise, communication will be factual, proportionate and focused on the pupil's education, wellbeing and the practical steps needed to improve attendance. Parents will be told whom to contact if they require support.

Attendance information may be included in reports to parents and discussed at meetings. The school may also communicate the number of days or lessons missed so that the educational impact of absence is clear.

14. Attendance rewards

The school may recognise and celebrate good or improved attendance in ways that are inclusive and do not disadvantage pupils whose absence is related to disability, medical needs or circumstances outside their control. The emphasis will be on belonging, improvement and engagement rather than solely on perfect attendance.

15. Data protection and information sharing

Attendance information is personal data and will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's privacy notices. Information may be shared with the Department for Education, the local authority and other agencies where there is a lawful basis or statutory requirement to do so, including for safeguarding purposes.

16. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will review the implementation and effectiveness of this policy at least annually and sooner where statutory guidance or legislation changes. The Governing Body will receive appropriate attendance information and maintain strategic oversight of attendance.

This policy will be published on the school website and brought to the attention of pupils, parents and staff. The school may also provide a shorter parent-facing attendance guide alongside this full policy.

17. Key references

- Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance – statutory guidance (updated 9 July 2026).
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and subsequent amendments.
- Education Act 1996.
- Department for Education, Children missing education – statutory guidance.
- Department for Education guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance.
- London Borough of Hounslow Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.