



# St Michael's C of E Primary School

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**OUR VISION: 'Working together, growing together, for all to flourish.'**

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## Attendance and Absence – General Information

Dear Parents and Carers,

All schools have a duty to monitor the absences of the children at their school, to ensure regular and punctual attendance at school. At our school we monitor attendance weekly.

The law does not grant parents/carers with an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. Schools are only allowed by law, to authorise non-medical absences if requested in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. Permission must be sought from the school in advance using an 'Absence Request' form – an **S2**. If the circumstances relating to the request are considered exceptional, the authorising of absences will then still be conditional on any other relevant factors such as the child's previous attendance rates; the ability to catch up on missed work, or the wider impact of missing the specified period of time.

If a request for absence is refused by the school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Where your child has 10 or more **unauthorised** absences from school (5 days or more), we are obliged to report this to the Education Welfare Service, which may then lead to a penalty notice being issued by Devon County Council. A penalty notice offers a parent the opportunity of dealing with a potential offence without going to court, by paying a penalty. Where a penalty remains unpaid, then the case will proceed to a magistrate's court. The provision of penalty notices is set by Regulations and the amount of the penalty, timeframe for payment or payment method, are not able to be varied by Devon County Council.

Devon County Council's advice is that schools must be extremely cautious about approving absence requests if the pupil's education is likely to be impacted upon. Parents should ensure that they know whether the absence will be authorised or not before they remove their child from school as an **unauthorised absence will likely result in a penalty notice or court summons being issued to each parent for each pupil affected**. We ask that the request form is completed **at least three weeks** before the intended absence.

**Parents should also note that only one penalty notice per parent per child will normally be issued within a two-year period.** Any second 'offence' within a two-year period will be referred straight to court.

There are, understandably, many reasons why a child may be absent from school during the course of a school year, including when they are ill or to attend medical appointments. No matter what the reason for the absence, please notify the school when your child is not in attendance. We use standardised registration codes to indicate the reason for your child's absence. If we are not informed of the reasons why your child has not attended school, then we must record this as an 'unauthorised absence'.

We hope that this helps to clarify the law around term-time absences. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Kind regards,  
Kate Arnold  
Head of School