St Michael's
C.E. Primary School

Attendance Curriculum: Rationale, Implementation and Impact

"Courage to Flourish in the Love of God"

1. What is the Attendance Curriculum?

The Attendance Curriculum is a planned programme of explicit attendance education from Nursery to Year 6. It teaches pupils the knowledge, language, routines and help-seeking behaviours that support regular attendance, punctuality, belonging and successful re-engagement after absence.

At St Michael's, attendance is taught because positive attendance habits do not develop through monitoring alone. Pupils need to understand why school matters, how routines help, what to do when school feels difficult, and how to seek support before barriers become entrenched.

> **Key principle**
> Attendance is taught positively. Children are never blamed or shamed for absence or lateness. Adults combine high expectations with warmth, curiosity, support and a clear message that every return is a fresh start.

Our curriculum aims

- Develop pupils' understanding that every day in school creates opportunities to learn, grow, build relationships and flourish.
- Teach the importance of punctuality and calm, predictable morning routines.
- Strengthen pupils' sense of belonging so they know they are noticed, valued and missed when absent.
- Teach pupils how to identify worries, name barriers and ask trusted adults for help.
- Support confident reintegration following absence so pupils can return without shame and get back on track step by step.
- Build resilience, responsibility and independence as pupils move through school and prepare for secondary education.
- Complement the school's wider attendance systems by helping prevent barriers from becoming persistent or severe.

The St Michael's Way

Learning behaviour	Attendance meaning
Be Ready	Come to school, arrive on time and be prepared to learn.
Be Respectful	Welcome others, use kind words and help classmates feel that they belong.
Be Responsible	Build helpful routines, ask for help and make positive choices.
The A Choice	Always tell an adult if you are struggling.

2. How the Curriculum is Taught

Every class from Nursery to Year 6 receives a planned 10-minute attendance lesson each week. The ten core lessons provide the progressive sequence. Teachers then revisit, repeat and adapt the learning across the year in response to the needs of their class, attendance patterns and individual pupils.

> **Weekly entitlement**
> A short, explicit attendance lesson every week ensures that attendance remains part of the everyday

> language and culture of school rather than becoming a one-off intervention or a message only used when attendance is poor.

A consistent 10-minute lesson rhythm

Stage	Typical approach
Connect	Introduce the idea through a question, object, image, scenario or familiar routine.
Teach	Give the clear attendance message using age-appropriate language.
Talk	Use short questions so pupils explain, reflect and make links to their own school experience.
Practise	Rehearse a helpful phrase, routine, response or problem-solving strategy.
Takeaway	End with one memorable sentence that can be repeated during the week.

Where the messages are reinforced

- Morning registration and Monday morning reset
- Class worship and whole-school collective worship
- PSHE and circle time
- Transitions and classroom routines
- Welcome-back and reintegration conversations
- Pastoral work, ELSA and targeted attendance support
- Restorative conversations when friendship or relationship difficulties affect attendance
- Parent communication and family support work

Quick weekly routine for revisiting learning

1 minute – Welcome: “Good morning. It is good to be together again.”

2 minutes – Attendance message: revisit one core phrase.

3 minutes – Question: e.g. What helps you feel ready? Who can help if school feels hard?

3 minutes – Partner talk: pupils talk to a partner; take two or three responses.

1 minute – Takeaway: repeat the weekly phrase together.

3. The Ten-Lesson Curriculum

Lesson	Focus	Key learning
1. Every Day Matters	Value of attendance	Every day provides opportunities to learn, grow, build friendships and flourish.
2. We Belong Here	Belonging and inclusion	Everyone belongs at St Michael’s; pupils are noticed and missed, and return is always welcomed.
3. Starting the Day Well	Punctuality	Arriving on time supports a calm start, inclusion and readiness to learn.
4. Morning Routines	Positive habits	Helpful home routines can make mornings easier and build responsibility and independence.

Lesson	Focus	Key learning
5. Feelings About School	Emotional wellbeing	Different feelings about school are normal; when something feels hard, pupils should tell an adult.
6. Catching Up After Absence	Returning confidently	A return is a restart. Pupils learn practical steps to re-enter learning and ask for help.
7. Healthy Enough for School?	Attendance decisions	Adults decide when a child is too unwell; pupils learn to name how they feel and seek support.
8. Friendship and Attendance	Relationships	Friendship worries are addressed through support and restorative approaches, not avoidance.
9. My Future Self	Aspirations	Attendance helps build the knowledge, confidence and habits needed for the next stage and future life.
10. Our Attendance Promise	Reflection and commitment	Classes create a shared commitment to attend, belong, support one another and ask for help.

Core phrases pupils hear repeatedly: Every day matters. • We belong here. • On time, calm mind. • Feelings are okay. Help is here. • A return is a restart. • Make the A Choice. • Support, not absence.

4. Progression from Nursery to Year 6

The core message remains consistent, but the teaching becomes progressively more sophisticated. Teachers adapt examples, questions and activities to pupils' developmental stage, communication needs and lived experience.

Phase	Typical approach	Progression in understanding
Nursery & Reception	Puppets, pictures, sequencing, simple routines, feelings faces and repeated short phrases.	"School helps me grow." Children learn that they belong, practise arrival routines and learn simple ways to ask for help.
Years 1–2	Role-play, sentence stems, drawings, simple scenarios and rehearsed welcome/help phrases.	Pupils explain why school matters, recognise helpful routines and know who can help when they are worried.
Years 3–4	Problem-solving, barrier-and-solution tasks, checklists and more detailed scenarios.	Pupils begin to understand patterns, choices, consequences and practical strategies for overcoming barriers.
Years 5–6	Reflection, leadership, independence, future habits and links to secondary school.	Pupils take increasing responsibility for routines, understand how attendance supports future success and help set the tone for younger pupils.

Inclusive adaptation

The curriculum is for every pupil, including pupils who face additional barriers to attendance. Staff adapt delivery without lowering expectations. Adaptation may include visual prompts, simplified language, repetition, pre-teaching, reduced verbal load, social stories, trusted-adult support, sensory or regulation strategies, individual scripts and personalised reintegration plans.

For pupils with SEND, medical needs, emotionally based school avoidance, anxiety, trauma or complex family circumstances, the universal curriculum is complemented by individual support. Attendance teaching must never be used to minimise genuine health needs or complex barriers.

> **Safeguarding and wellbeing**
> If an attendance lesson prompts a disclosure or indicates that a pupil is struggling, staff listen

carefully and follow the school's safeguarding and pastoral systems. Concerns are recorded and shared through the appropriate school processes.

5. Staff Guidance: Language and Relational Practice

The way adults speak about attendance is part of the curriculum. Staff model calm, consistent and hopeful language so pupils experience high expectations alongside belonging and support.

Avoid	Say instead
"Where have you been?"	"It is lovely to see you."
"You've missed loads."	"Let's help you get started."
"You're late again."	"Good morning. I'm glad you're here. Let's get you settled."
"You are always off."	"We missed you. Today is a fresh start."
"Everyone else managed."	"Tell me what has been difficult. We will work out the next step."

When a child returns after absence

- Welcome first: make it clear the pupil is wanted and belongs.
- Help the pupil orientate: what is happening now, what they need, and the first manageable task.
- Do not interrogate the pupil about the absence in front of peers.
- Use the "Back on Track" approach: come in, say hello, look at the board, ask a friend, ask an adult, try the first step, keep going.
- Escalate any concern about the reason for absence through the school's usual safeguarding or attendance systems.

When school feels difficult

Reinforce the A Choice: "Always tell an adult if you are struggling." Pupils can use the script: "I feel ___ because ___. Please can you help me?" Staff should respond with curiosity, identify the barrier and connect the pupil or family with appropriate support.

6. How the Curriculum Fits the Wider Attendance Strategy

The Attendance Curriculum is one part of a wider whole-school approach. It does not replace accurate registration, first-day response, analysis of data, work with families, safeguarding action or targeted intervention. Instead, it strengthens the culture and preventative work that sits alongside these systems.

Whole-school attendance practice	How the curriculum supports it
High expectations	Pupils are explicitly taught that regular attendance and punctuality matter.
Belonging and relationships	Children learn that they are known, valued, missed and welcomed back.

Whole-school attendance practice	How the curriculum supports it
Early identification	Weekly lessons create regular opportunities for pupils to name worries and ask for help.
Support first	Staff listen, understand barriers and connect children and families with help before concerns escalate.
Reintegration	Pupils learn that absence does not define them and that returning is a fresh start.
Persistent and severe absence	Universal teaching is combined with individual and family support for pupils at risk of, or experiencing, persistent or severe absence.
Punctuality	Lessons explicitly teach calm starts, morning routines and the value of arriving on time.
Safeguarding	Children are taught that trusted adults notice, listen and help; unexplained absence is followed up through school systems.

School benchmark and early response

The school aspires to 100% attendance and uses 96% as an important attendance benchmark. Attendance below 95% or emerging patterns prompt closer review and support. Persistent absence is defined as missing 10% or more of sessions; severe absence is missing 50% or more.

Support-first approach

- Expect and monitor: accurate daily registers, first-day contact and weekly review of patterns.
- Listen and understand: speak with pupils and families to identify barriers, including illness, SEND, mental health, transport, housing or family circumstances.
- Facilitate support: use pastoral support, Early Help, external agencies, pupil voice and appropriate attendance plans.
- Formalise and review support where needed, with clear goals and review points.
- Use legal intervention only when support has not worked, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate, in line with the Attendance Policy and statutory guidance.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact

Leaders evaluate the Attendance Curriculum as part of the school's wider attendance strategy. Impact is considered through multiple sources of evidence rather than through lesson completion alone.

Evidence source	What leaders consider
Attendance data	Whole-school, year-group, class and pupil trends; persistent and severe absence; punctuality; patterns over time.
Vulnerable groups	Attendance of pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, young carers, pupils with long-term medical needs and other pupils facing barriers.
Pupil voice	Do pupils understand why attendance matters? Do they know who can help? Do they know how to return positively after absence?
Parent voice	What helps or prevents attendance? Is school support clear, accessible and relational?

Evidence source	What leaders consider
Staff practice	Are weekly lessons delivered? Are consistent scripts, welcome-back routines and support pathways understood and used?
Intervention review	Are actions improving attendance or removing barriers? What needs adapting, repeating or intensifying?

The Senior Attendance Champion, Attendance Officer and attendance team review attendance and punctuality data at least weekly. Leaders also undertake half-termly, termly and annual analysis, benchmark patterns and evaluate the impact of interventions. Curriculum content can therefore be revisited or intensified in response to emerging needs.

Examples of intended impact

- Pupils can explain why attendance and punctuality matter.
- Pupils know that they belong and are welcomed back following absence.
- Pupils can identify trusted adults and use help-seeking language when school feels difficult.
- Staff use consistent, non-shaming attendance language and reintegration routines.
- Emerging barriers are identified earlier through pupil voice and relational conversations.
- Attendance actions are informed by data and by an understanding of individual barriers.
- Support is adapted for vulnerable pupils and pupils with additional needs.

8. Leadership

The Attendance Curriculum helps make the school's attendance strategy visible in everyday practice. It demonstrates that leaders do not view attendance solely as an administrative or enforcement issue: pupils are explicitly taught the routines, attitudes and help-seeking behaviours that support regular attendance, while leaders monitor patterns and remove barriers through a support-first approach.

This approach is consistent with the current Ofsted school inspection toolkit, which considers whether leaders prioritise attendance and punctuality, foster a positive and respectful culture, apply clear policies effectively, set clear routines and expectations, and secure positive attendance and attitudes for all pupils, particularly those who may face additional barriers.

> **The key leadership story**
> Attendance is expected, explicitly taught, carefully monitored and supported. Leaders use data and relationships to understand barriers early, provide proportionate support, evaluate impact and escalate only when necessary.

9. Information for Parents and Carers

Families are essential partners in strong attendance. The Attendance Curriculum helps children understand the importance of school, but the school's approach is also built on working with parents and carers to identify and remove barriers.

- Children may arrive from 8:35am and should be on site before the pupil entrance gates close at 8:45am.
- Parents should report an unplanned absence to school before 9:00am on the first day and on each subsequent day of absence.
- Where possible, routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside the school day.

- If attendance is becoming difficult, families are encouraged to contact school early so support can be considered before patterns become entrenched.
- The Senior Attendance Champion is Mrs Roberts (Headteacher). The Attendance Officer is Mrs Hook. Families can contact the school office on 0121 464 4345 or office@stmichaelsb32.bdmat.org.uk.

Our message to families

We combine high expectations with support. We want every child to attend, belong and flourish, and we will work with families to understand barriers and identify the right help at the right time.

Together, we attend, belong and flourish.