

The St Michael Steiner School

Attendance, Punctuality and Registration Policy & Procedure

Absence and lateness can adversely affect a child's progress, attitude to school, and social wellbeing, which can lead to anxiety, insecurity and behavioural problems. Pupils who frequently arrive late or are often absent are also disruptive to the rhythm of the morning and this has an effect on all of the children in the class. Parents should be made aware of these wider repercussions at parents' meetings, and the importance of regular and punctual attendance, not only for their own children but also for others, should be reiterated regularly.

Monitoring

The school uses a cloud-based electronic data storage and retrieval system called Engage, which monitors attendance and provides attendance data.

Parents are expected to contact the school when their child is not going to be at school and give a reason for the absence. The receptionist marks the register accordingly and follows up absences for which a reason has not been given.

Through Engage, each class teacher can monitor and analyse attendance data regularly and identify patterns of poor attendance at individual and cohort level, so that all parties can work together to resolve issues as soon as they become apparent.

Absence and Lateness

We cannot sanction absence for any reason other than illness, accident, bereavement or similarly serious events. Family holidays during term time will not be sanctioned and must be recorded as unauthorised absences.

Class Teachers, Kindergarten Teachers and High School Class Guardians should be aware of pupils' attendance and ensure that they have an explanation for any and every absence or lateness.

Our school community is very widespread across London, and traffic and public transport are not always reliable. However, this is not a legitimate reason for regular lateness. In the case of pupils who travel by themselves, parents may not be aware that they are not getting to school on time and should be informed as soon as a pattern of lateness starts to develop, so that they can provide support.

If lateness is persistent, the teacher may ask that the child be kept at home until the problem is resolved. This may seem counter-intuitive, but it will limit the effect on the rest of the class and can prompt a change of habit.

Registration procedure

It is expected that children will arrive at school by 8:25am every day.

Teachers should mark the register promptly at 8:30am and 2:00pm as follows:

- Pupils present at 8:30 should be marked / in the morning and \ in the afternoon.
- When a parent has informed the Class Teacher of the reason for an absence, the appropriate code can be entered at registration.
- Pupils who arrive during registration, i.e. before the register is sent to the office, should be marked L
- The register should then be sent to the office immediately, and by 9:00am at the latest, to be checked by the receptionist.
- Pupils who arrive after registration must go to reception to be registered.

The Receptionist should mark late pupils:

Reviewed: September 2023

Next review: July 2024

U: Arrived after registration had closed, i.e. after the register has been returned to reception.
The Receptionist should mark absent pupils according to the code below:

Codes for authorised absences are:

C: Leave of absence authorised by the school. Only granted in exceptional circumstances.

H: Holiday authorised by the school. Only granted in exceptional circumstances.

I: illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, we can request parents to provide medical evidence, in the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes, to support illness, but we should not request this unnecessarily.

M: Medical or dental appointments

R: Religious observance

S: Study leave. Usually only granted to Class 12 students.

Codes for unauthorised absences are:

G: Holiday not authorised by the school

N: No reason given for the absence. Sometimes parents contact the Class Teacher, and sometimes they phone the school. This code should be entered when neither has happened. The absence must then be followed up by the receptionist and the code changed once the reason is known. The change should be clear and the original code should still be visible (i.e. no tippex)

O: Absent from school without authorisation. This code should be used when no legitimate reason for the absence can be found.

- If a pupil leaves school early, they should go to reception and tell the receptionist.
- In the case of young children, this can be done by the Class Teacher or the parent who collects the child.
- Lateness and absences should be recorded in the child's End of Year Report.

When attendance becomes a concern

School attendance has deteriorated significantly post-covid and has become a national problem. Being at home became normal, and many people have struggled to return to their previous normality. Poor attendance can, anyway, become entrenched or habitual in particular children or groups of children or parents. It is vital that the school conveys, and the whole community experiences, an expectation that children come to school every day and arrive on time, and so a consistent response to poor attendance across the school is needed.

According to DfE guidance, 10 absences without good reason would be cause for concern. However, poor attendance may be worrying earlier, for other reasons, e.g. if there is a pattern (a child who always misses Mondays), or if the reasons given for absence are not valid or not convincing.

When attendance becomes a concern for any reason, the Class/Kindergarten Teacher/Guardian should:

1. Consider whether there may be a Safeguarding issue related to the poor attendance. A Quality of Care risk assessment form is available from the DSL.
2. If so, report it to the DSL, who will follow the school's Safeguarding procedures.
3. If there is no Safeguarding concern:
 - i. discuss the issue with pupils and/or parents, depending on the age of the pupil, and

- ii. listen in order to understand barriers to attendance
 - iii. agree together how to resolve them
4. Give the strategy some time to work. Things may improve initially and then deteriorate again, or they may gradually improve, or there may be no change.
 5. Monitor the situation and review it after a month.
 6. If the measures taken are not working, meet again with the pupil and/or parents and repeat all parts of steps 3 - 5
 7. If there is no change, or things have deteriorated, report the concern to Hounslow's School Attendance Support Service (SASS) (See contact information below).
 8. We are required to do this when attendance becomes a concern and may do so without warning, but, if at all possible, Class/Kindergarten Teachers and Guardians should already be in discussion with the child's parents and have tried to remedy the situation before it gets to this stage.
 9. Unless there are safeguarding concerns that may make the child vulnerable, the parents should be informed that the school is taking this step in order to support them; a report to the local authority should not usually come as a complete surprise to parents.
 10. Continue to work with the SASS as needed.
 11. The above also applies to pupils who persistently arrive late or leave early.

If you have further concerns or questions about attendance, you can contact the Hounslow's School Attendance Support Service (SASS) for advice, or to make a referral:

Email: SASSDuty@hounslow.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8583 2622

Hounslow House
7 Bath Road
Hounslow
Middlesex
TW3 3EB