

Regular School Attendance

Information for parents and carers

Did you know? Research shows higher student attendance at school is associated, on average, with higher student achievement.

Why is regular attendance at school important?

Regular school attendance will mean that your son has a better chance in life. Your son will achieve better results when he attends school all day, every day.

- He will learn better
- He will make friends
- He will be happier
- He will have a brighter future.

What constitutes good attendance?

Attendance percentages are not like examination results: an attendance percentage needs to be in the high nineties before it can be considered good. Consider the following examples:

- 10 days absence (1 day a month) results in 93%
- 20 days absence (2 days a month) results in 86%
- Missing one day of school each week adds up to 2 months missed over a year
- Each day absent in school has an impact on numeracy skills.
- Poor attendance may be associated with future unemployment, criminal activity, substance abuse and poorer health and life expectancy.
- Research states that having 20 days off school every year means that a pupil will probably obtain a whole grade lower in exams than they are really capable of.
- Pupils with less than 85% attendance are unlikely to gain 5 A* - C GCSE qualifications.

In order for an attendance record to be good it must be 96% or above:-

- **100% - excellent attendance**
- **98% - very good attendance**
- **96% - good attendance**

Each year, a large number of pupils in every group achieve 100% attendance; showing that this is an achievable target.

Why must I send my child to school?

In law, you must make sure your child is enrolled and attends school all day, every school day unless they have an acceptable reason. Principals decide if the reason given for your child's absence is acceptable.

Avoid keeping your child away from school for:

- Birthdays, finishing off assignments, visiting family and friends, if they sleep in, looking after other children or minor check ups.
- Routine medical or other health appointments should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays.
- Sometimes pupils are kept from school because they have a cold, sore throat etc. Please do not allow your child to

have time off for minor complaints or illnesses; if they are well enough to be up and about, they are generally well enough to attend school. If you think that the illness is caused by your child's anxiety about coming to school contact us immediately.

Do I need to let the school know if my child has been away from school?

Yes, you must let the school know the reason why your child has been absent from school by a note presented to his Form Teacher on the day of his return.

What can you do?

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day, make that the expectation. Regular attendance at school sets up good behaviours for regular attendance at work.
- Try not to schedule dental or medical appointments during school hours. Arrange family holidays during scheduled school holidays so that they are not missing out on classes and, therefore, will not struggle to make up for lost time.
- If your son wants to stay at home to finish an assignment, rather than letting them stay at home, expect them to go to school – make attendance the number one priority. Later, you can discuss with them how they can improve their study habits or adjust their schedule.
- Talk to your son. What are their feelings about school? What interests them at school? Are there any difficult situations? It helps if you open these discussions in a relaxed way so that your son knows you are demonstrating concern, not authority.
- Try to be aware of your son's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Familiarise yourself with the school's attendance policy (available from St Michael's College office).
- Monitor your son's attendance and school performance.

Leaving School

Pupils may leave school during the day only with **written request** from a parent. In this case they should:

- Inform the Form Teacher who will sign the request. An appointment card must be presented for medical/dental appointments.
- Report to the Main Office to sign out with written request (and on return to sign in).

In the event of a pupil not having written permission to leave school a Parent/Guardian must sign the pupil out at the school office.

Illness/Injury

If a pupil is unfit to stay in school, the office staff will contact home. Parents will be requested to collect the ill/injured pupil from the school and sign him out. Parents may give permission for another person to collect the pupil. This person will also be required to sign the pupil out.