



Steam Mills Primary School

Policy and Procedure: Attendance

UN – Rights of the Child

Article 28: Every child has the right to an education

Steam Mills Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR PARENTS

2020

Date: Spring 2020

Review Date: Spring 2021

Approved by Governors: _____

Signed by _____(Chairperson)

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INTRODUCTION

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding policy and Offer of Early Help.

Regular attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. The school defines regular attendance as being 100% attendance.

THE LAW

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA) and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
 - Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
 - Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

- It is realised that a child may be absent from school because of genuine illness. In such cases absence will be authorised. However, patterns of frequent or repeated sporadic absence will be followed up by the school with the LA becoming involved, if necessary.
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

To promote regular attendance, thereby offering all pupils equal access to learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days to help them reach their full potential.
- To fulfil Safeguarding responsibilities

This Policy is designed to help all adults concerned to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To communicate clearly and regularly the attendance policy and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To maintain reports and support pupils as necessary.
- To report to the LA as required.
- To consistently administer the attendance policy.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon.
- To promote good attendance
- To report a child missing in education if they miss 10 days of school or earlier if there are concerns

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 9.00 a.m (doors will open at 8.50am).
- To inform school of any absence before 9.15am.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's 'Leave Of Absence Form', giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school will log instances of absence and lateness. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- When attendance dips below 96%, parents will be informed via eSchools and more formal monitoring will take place.
- If the concerns persist and/or attendance drops to 90%, the school will write to the parents/carers to arrange an informal meeting to look at ways to improve attendance
- If the concerns persist the school will arrange a formal meeting between the parent/carer and the Head teacher/LA.

Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action. See Appendix 1.

ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence of 10 sessions or more (within a 10 week period), taken without authorisation will be referred to the LA. Resulting prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued by the Local Authority, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child (see Appendix 2).

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

Parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. (Appendix 3) These may be obtained from the school office.

- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Head Teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within seven school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised. (Appendix 1)
- There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

A fixed penalty request will be sent to the Local Authority should an unauthorised holiday of five or more consecutive school days (10 sessions) or 10 sessions within a 10 week period take place. (Appendix 1)

Safeguarding

A child will be reported to the Local Authority as a child 'Missing in Education' if they are not in school for 10 days, or earlier if there are concerns.

Following safeguarding advice, should a child not be in school and no contact has been made with parents by 10 am, then school will report the child as missing by contacting Gloucestershire police on 101.

LATENESS

Punctuality is an important life skill.

- Children must be in class by 9.00 a.m. each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time but before 9.15am.
- The school doors will open at 8.50am and close at 9.00am. Children who arrive after that time must be accompanied to the office by parent/carer, who should complete a 'late slip'.
- Lateness will be monitored and followed up, where necessary.
- If arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.15am, the pupil will receive an 'U', with notes on the number of minutes late and reason given. Parents will also be asked to fill in a 'Late Slip', giving reasons for the later arrival so that the school can monitor.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.

Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists, parents or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Head Teacher.

Should there be more than 5 late sessions recorded in a 5 week period, a formal warning letter will be issued. If there is further lateness, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the LA.

ILLNESS

- Please notify the school of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness or if patterns develop.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Please try to make appointments outside school hours. If a pupil misses school frequently for appointments, the school reserves the right to request evidence and will discuss these absences with the parent/carer.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

In the event of the school having to close at the Head teacher's discretion, e.g. adverse weather, industrial action, absences will be recorded as authorised.

THE ROLE OF THE LA

The LA strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the LA also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness. Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."

The LA may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Head Teacher can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during a 10 week period.
- Where there have been ten occurrences of unauthorised lateness within a ten week period.
- Other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement.

Within the 15-day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning. (Appendix 2)

- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence

- issue a Penalty Notice without warning

GOVERNORS

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Reviewed in accordance with DfE guidelines.

Appendix 1:



Steam Mills Primary School

Steam Mills, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 3JD
Tel/Fax: 01594 822567. Email: admin@steammills.gloucs.sch.uk
Website: www.steammillsprimary.co.uk
Executive Head Teacher: Mel Davis

Dear

Following careful consideration of your request I am writing to let you know that your request for permission for a term time holiday does not meet the school policy's exceptional circumstances criteria and has been refused.

Please note by law you are required to secure the regular attendance of your child at school. Any unauthorised absence will be recorded against your child on the school attendance register. Following any unauthorised absence your child's attendance/non-attendance will be reviewed. Following the review a referral might be made to the local authority. The referral may include a request for consideration of your case for possible legal action. Which may result in you receiving a Penalty Notice or a prosecution being brought against you for failing to secure the regular attendance of !!!!!!!!!!!!! at school and you having a criminal record. A copy of this letter will be retained on file and/or passed to the Local Authority and it may be referred to as part of any future legal action.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. There is a risk that if your child's attendance remains at the current level a referral may be made to the local authority, who will start a legal process. I enclose a leaflet which gives more detail about school attendance.

The school defines regular attendance as being 100% attendance. Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences. This falls in line with the school's Attendance Policy and is available to view at www.steammillsprimary.co.uk.

Yours faithfully

Mel Davis
Executive Head Teacher

Appendix 2:



Steam Mills Primary School

Steam Mills, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 3JD
Tel/Fax: 01594 822567. Email:admin@steammills.gloucs.sch.uk
Website: www.steammillsprimary.co.uk
Executive Head Teacher: Mrs Mel Davis

Date

Name

Address

Dear (Name)

Re: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Warning of penalty notice for persistent lateness after the register has closed

Under the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within an agreed Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

(Name) has been marked absent from school for () sessions in the previous () weeks without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the headteacher. Please note there are normally two sessions in each school day. Arriving after the registers have closed for the morning or afternoon session will result in an unauthorised absence mark for the entire session.

This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

I need to inform you that the level of (Name's) unauthorised absence places you at risk of a penalty notice and/or court action by the Local Authority.

Providing there are no further unauthorised absences within the next fifteen school days, which will start two days after the date of this letter (to allow for postage) a penalty notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must also draw your attention to the fact that should (Name) have more unauthorised absences related to lateness within the next twelve months following this warning letter, you may receive a penalty notice without further warning.

Yours sincerely,

Mel Davis

Executive Head Teacher

Appendix 3:



Steam Mills Primary School

Steam Mills, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 3JD
Tel/Fax: 01594 822567. Email: admin@steammills.gloucs.sch.uk
Website: www.steammillsprimary.co.uk
Executive Head Teacher: Mrs Mel Davis

REQUEST FOR A LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM AND READ THE INFORMATION OVERLEAF:

Pupil Name:	Date of birth:
Year group:	
Address	
First date of absence:	Date of return:
No of days absent	

If a pupil fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child's name from the Admission Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.

Exceptional reason for absence:

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

Name(s) of parent/carer making the application:	Address:
Signature of parent/carer	

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date received	
Current attendance %	Last year's attendance %
Exceptional reason accepted	Yes/No
Absence authorised	Yes/No
We expect your child to be in school on	

Request for a leave of absence during term time

Parents should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in "exceptional circumstances".

You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching and learning that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed and arrangements need to be made for individual children to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence, this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the attached form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least seven days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.

Yours sincerely

Mel Davis
Executive Head Teacher