



STONEYDELPH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Grow & Achieve

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

Our key priority is to ensure that the children attending our school are as successful as possible, are able to reach their full potential and gain maximum benefits from their educational experience. We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are vital in achieving these aims. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Research published by the Department of Education in February 2015 very clearly shows that pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level five or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence.

All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Parents must take responsibility for their children's attendance and support school in this.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

Legal Requirements:

The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, with a particular focus on persistent absentees;
 - Ensure every student has access to full time education to which they are entitled;
 - Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All students to be punctual to their lessons.

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems that may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers (EWWs) where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.

- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.
- We will report to the Governors regarding school attendance data, policy and procedures half-termly.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away when your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home, which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

Statutory Action:

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered the parents may be guilty of an offence and be prosecuted by the local authority.

Penalty Notices:

Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents; they are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child regularly attends the school where they are registered.

Penalty notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. “Persistent” means at least 20 sessions (10 school days) of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher. (E.G. family holiday).
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. “Persistent” means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child’s first five days of exclusion. An “excluded child” is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Please note that there is no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year. In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child. Use of a Penalty notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absences/lateness will be restricted to one notice/warning per parent of a pupil per academic year. Continued poor attendance in the same academic year can be addressed by other statutory actions available to the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996.

Where a Penalty Notice is issued a fine of £60 per child per parent applies, if this is not paid within 21 days the fine increases to £120. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice within 28 days can result in the council prosecuting parents/carers under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1000.

The above is in accordance with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices which came into effect in January 2018.

Persistent Absentees:

A child whose attendance is below 90% is classified as a persistent absentee. As such the school and the Education Welfare Worker (EWW) will closely monitor the situation and if the attendance does not improve and/or absence is unauthorised statutory action in the form of fixed term penalties may result. Unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Admissions Register:

As a school we must keep an admissions register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school. We are obliged to keep record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Attendance Procedures:

Our aim is to ensure parents/carers are fully informed regarding their children’s attendance. To support this we use a colour coded system. As a school our aim is to achieve an overall attendance of 95%, which will give every young person the best chance of achieving their full potential, and bringing us in line with national attendance expectations.

Green	95% – 100% Well Done. This is excellent.	If you are in the green group you have been absent for less than two weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.
Yellow	90% – 94% Improvement Needed!	If you are in the yellow group you could be missing up to 4 weeks of learning in the whole year.

Red	Less than 90% Persistent Absence Pupil	You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 4 weeks of learning in the school year.
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To ensure every family is fully aware of their child's current attendance percentage each term we will send out a letter detailing which group your child is in. If your child is in the red or yellow group a copy of the attendance certificate will be included.

Mrs Claire Bevan, School Liaison and Support Officer, will check the percentage attendance of all students below 95% and will assess if further action should be taken dependent on reasons for absence.

The following actions will take place at each attendance threshold:

- **At 94%** - a standard letter may be sent to parents/carers informing them of the percentage attendance and reminding them of the importance of regular school attendance.
- **At 91%** - The School Liaison & Support Officer may contact parents/carers by telephone to discuss reasons for non-attendance and offer support.
- **If no improvement and attendance falls below 90%** - Parents/carers may be sent a Stage 1 concern letter from the School Liaison & Support Officer warning of further action if attendance does not improve.
- **If no improvement and attendance continues to fall**- Parents/carers may be invited in to a meeting with the School Liaison & Support Officer to discuss attendance. An Early Help Assessment may be completed with parents/carers consent to ascertain what action is required. Parents/carers will be warned that any further cases of unauthorised absence may result in further action being taken against them. Parents may also receive a Medical Evidence letter (see below for further details). **Should parents/carers fail to attend this meeting and attendance is of increasing concern school may contact First Response for further support.**
- **If, after an agreed time of support and monitoring, no improvement is made and attendance continues to fall school will contact First Response and an application for a Penalty Notice will be made.**

Medical Evidence:

For children who are classified as persistently absent (attendance below 90%) and have received a Medical Evidence letter the school will no longer authorise any absence for medical reasons unless supported by one of the following:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- Letter from a professional
- Medical note/ Print screen of medical notes
- Medication prescribed by a GP/Copy of prescription
- Letters concerning hospital appointments
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist

Please be aware that telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carer are **not** acceptable as medical evidence when attendance is of serious concern.

Rewards:

At Stoneydelph Primary School we are keen to reward children who's attendance is good (95% or above). There are a number of strategies we employ to do this. Children who have 100% attendance are entered into

a weekly raffle, this is drawn during assembly and the chosen child wins a £5 Asda voucher. Each term those children who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate during the last day assembly; those who have achieved 100% attendance at the end of the year receive a certificate and a small prize. Our colour coded system, explained above, rewards the children with 95% attendance and above through receipt of a letter congratulating them and their parents for good attendance.

Registration Procedures:

Below are the registration procedures for morning registration, please note the different start times for Early Years/Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Registers are computerised and marked morning and afternoon. Children arriving after the start times indicated below will be marked as 'Late' (L), children arriving after 9.25am KS1 and 9.20am KS2 and 1.15pm for the afternoon session for all years will be marked as 'Late After the Registers Closed' (U), this is an unauthorised absence mark.

Reception: Entrance via the reception doors after the first bell at **8.45am**, this door will be manned by a member of staff **between 8.45am and 8.55am**. The second KS1 bell sounds at **8.55am** to indicate the start of the day and close of registers within the classroom, once this bell has sounded all children arriving at school **MUST** enter via the school office, **no child will be allowed to enter via the reception door after 8.55am**.

KS1: Children will enter their classrooms after the first bell at **8.45am** the second bell sounds at **8.55am** to indicate the start of the day and close of registers within the classroom, once this bell has sounded all children arriving at school **MUST** enter via the school office, **no child will be allowed to enter via the KS1 doors after 8.55am**.

KS2: Children will enter the classroom via the KS2 door, or if in year 3-4 their classroom doors, after the first bell at **8.45am** the second KS2 bell sounds at **8.50am** to indicate the start of the school day and close of registers within the classroom. Once the bell has sounded all children arriving at school **MUST** enter via the school office, **no child will be allowed to enter via the KS2 or classroom doors after 8.50am**.

Good Timekeeping:

Good time keeping is as important as good attendance. At Stoneydelph Primary School the children are allowed entry at **8.45am** to enable them to be in the classroom ready for the start of the school day (8.55am Reception/KS1 and 8.50am for KS2). It is essential that students arrive punctually as not to miss out on essential learning time. Children arriving late for school must report to the school office, where a log is kept of the arrival time and reason for lateness. Mrs Claire Bevan, School Liaison and Support Officer will undertake regular checks of the late log and may contact parents/carers via telephone or letter where a child appears 6 within a 6 week period. If children continue to be late parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting to try and resolve any problems. Persistent lateness will not be tolerated and may result in a referral to first response. If a child is persistently late arriving at school i.e. after the register has closed – **"Persistent"** means at least 10 sessions of late arrival (after the register has closed) in a period of 12 weeks, excluding school holidays, then school will consider applying for a Fixed Penalty to be issued.

Parents should note that children are required to complete a morning challenge. It is school policy that children arriving late and missing this challenge will be kept in at break time to catch up.

First Day Contact/Absence Procedures:

Parents and carers are expected to inform school by 9.30am of the reason for absence each day their child is not in, this can be done via telephone on **01827 896666** or via email office@stoneydelph.staffs.sch.uk. If notification by the parent/carer is not received by 9.30am on the first day of absence, a telephone call or text message will be made to the parent/carer to determine the reason for non-attendance. In cases where the school is unable to ascertain a reason for absence, the session will be recorded as unauthorised (O). Where children are absent for a second and subsequent days (this does not have to be consecutive) and there has been no contact from parents/carers, Mrs Claire Bevan, School Liaison & Support Officer, will attempt to make contact via telephone, home visit or letter. Should unexplained absence continue and a child's attendance falls below 95% the attendance procedures as detailed earlier will be followed.

Medical Appointments

Missing school for a medical appointment is counted as an authorised absence however; parents/carers should try to make these out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should only be out of school for a minimum amount of time necessary with appointments being made at the beginning or end of the day to minimise disruption to the school day.

Illness at school:

In cases where a student is unwell at school, parents/carers will be contacted, who should then make arrangements for the child to be collected from school.

Missing Children:

If a child is absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission we have to notify the Local Authority. School will contact First Response and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern. It may be that the School Liaison and Support Officer or PCSO will make a home visit to establish the whereabouts and safety of your child.

Leave of absence during term time

As of the 1st September 2013, **the law gave no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.** Any application for leave must only be in **exceptional** circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are **exceptional** and warrant the granting of leave. **Head Teachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.** Parents can receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Any period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent/carer receiving a penalty notice fine, there is no longer a defined timescale for this type of unauthorised absence and multiple fines may be issued within an academic year.

Applications for leave of absence during term time must be made in writing at least 3 weeks in advance and the school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion and is not a parental right.

A written reply will be given to any parents requesting leave of absence, whether approved or not. In the cases of leave being unauthorised a Penalty Notice Application may be made (see section above for further details).

For the most up to date advice and guidance, and to access a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices please go to: www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education or contact the Education Welfare Worker based within the Local Support Team on 01827 782004

Elective Home Education (EHE):

If a parent wishes to electively home educate their child they should notify the school in writing, once this is received school will de-register the child and remove them from roll. School will notify the EHE Team when the child has been de-registered to be home educated. School will arrange for any child protection records to be passed to Staffordshire County Council EHE Team.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will we seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Useful Contact Details:

Mrs Claire Bevan
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c.bevan@stoneydolph.staffs.sch.uk

Mrs Jenny Wallbank
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