

Stanstead



Attendance Policy 2024 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This attendance policy ensure that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote excellent attendance.

At Stanstead, we know that education is crucial to provide children with the best possible life chances and consequently attendance at school is paramount to achieve this. Research shows that there is a clear link between academic achievement and attendance at school. DFE report, "the higher a pupil's attendance, the more they are likely to learn, and the better they are to achieve." If children do not have good attendance, this then dramatically impacts on the quality of their education and their life chances.

As a school, we are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by parents/carers
- Ensuring all stakeholders have a clear understanding of our tiered approach..
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure excellent attendance.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised Absence –

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has had an illness, that restricts them from being in school, and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence –

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

PROCEDURES

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support excellent attendance:

Tiered	Approach
Universal	Letters/Messages celebrating excellent attendance Assemblies – importance of good attendance Weekly celebration assemblies celebrating 100% attendance for the week Classroom poster of daily attendance Hall display of highest attending class of the week Trophy for highest attending class of the week £5 raffle for 100% attendance for the week Positive parent/carer relationship
Targeted	First day absence call Home visit if necessary Heads Up Letter – if attendance needs highlighting due to absences Letter 1 – 95% - 96% - concern of attendance levels Letter 2 – 93 – 94% - invite to informal meeting Letter 3 – 90 – 92% - invite to formal meeting Internal family support if needed to support punctuality and attendance
Specialist	Support from the attendance project Letter 4 – Under 89% - request for service from EWO Referral to external agencies Penalty notices Social care support

Attendance Expectations

- 100% attendance is an expectation of all pupils, including nursery children
- Children are to attend daily and arrive to school on time
- Parents/carers to inform school on each day of any absence before 9am
- Proof of medical appointments are to be shown to staff
- Any planned absences are discussed with school beforehand

Rewards and Incentives

- Class weekly Attendance Trophy
- £5 Voucher raffle for 100% attendance
- Termly 100% attendance prizes

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Attendance Support Team

- The office team, Headteacher and our school ELSA will work together to support children and families at Stanstead with attendance issues
- Mrs Smith, Headteacher is the Attendance Champion and will work to support families to ensure all children are in school every day.
- First day calling, parents meetings and home visits are carried out and all key staff are available to support and signposting for all families in regards to attendance.
- Attendance contracts are created to support families who struggle getting children into school.
- School liase with our Education Welfare Officer, Dawn O Hara, when required.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Completing the register promptly each morning and afternoon
- Quality first teaching to support the motivation for children coming to school
- Highlighting to parents attendance concerns and impact on missed learning

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance of children whose attendance is causing concern
- Working with families to support excellent attendance
- Working with outside agencies to provide support for families
- Conducting home visits

Administration staff

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Completing the daily attendance
- Calling parents where children are absent with no communication
- Highlighting to the headteacher where there are unknown reasons for absences
- Monitoring overall absence and highlighting key families to the headteacher
- Sending letters in line with attendance procedures

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensure their child attends school everyday unless exceptional circumstances
- Phoning school before 9.00am if their child will be absent.
- Show evidence, if required, of appointments
- Attend any meetings requested to discuss attendance
- Work with school to improve attendance if required

REGISTRATION

The school doors open at 8.45am and children are expected to be in school by 8.55am; this gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using Scholar Pack. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule

LATENESS

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 8.55am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.05am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

- Children who arrive and leave school with a parent/carer outside of the normal hours are signed in or out from the office.
- We ask all parents/carers to ensure their child arrives on time for the start of their school day so they can go into school with their class and start the day in a positive way. Coming in late can be distressing for children and also disrupts learning for others.
- Lateness is monitored by the class teacher and the attendance team.
- A letter will be sent to parents of children who are persistently late.
- If a child arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer as they will miss the main input of lessons. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



ABSENCES

Reporting an Absence

- Contact the school office via telephone before 9.00am
- A message can be left on the school's answer machine leaving the reason for absence
- If a valid reason is secured, the absence will be authorised

FIRST DAY CONTACT

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate our first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

- If a child has not arrived at school and the parent has not made contact by 9.15am, the school office will phone the parent/carer on the morning of the first day of absence. If there is no answer, the parent/carer will be sent a text to ask that school is contacted. If no reason is provided, the absence will be classed as unauthorised.
- If there continues to be no contact made by the parent/carer, school will make a call. If there is no response, the school office will attempt to call all contacts registered on the child's file to establish the reason for the child's absence.
- If the school have not had any notification by 11.00am, they will look to conduct a home visit. This home visit may be made earlier due to safeguarding concerns.
- A letter will be left at the home address if no one is at the home.
- If there continues to be no contact, referrals could be made to outside agencies, such as education welfare, children and families direct or children and welfare to conduct a safe and well check.
- If a child is off for longer than a week, we will ask to either speak to them over the phone or conduct a home visit so that contact is made.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.
- The school office should be informed by 9am on the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, for the duration of the absence.
- Depending on the reasons for absence, the Head Teacher will decide whether the absence can be authorised or not.
- If no medical evidence has been provided the school will look to conduct a safe and well visit on day 4 of absence / illness.
- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Appointments like dentists and eye appointments can generally be made outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for appointments, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. For all appointments, a letter/appointment card or official appointment text should be provided to the school office of the appointment prior or straight after to ensure this can be marked as an appointment.

APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Withdrawal from learning form available from the school office and handed in 2 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

The school expects attendance of at least **97%**.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

We can offer parents support with attendance in a range of ways:

- Attendance barriers meetings
- ELSA support
- Soft starts
- Signposting to Early help support
- Support with morning routines
- Attendance project support

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PENALTY NOTICES

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

Appendix 1

Legal Action Guidelines are set out below:

- **CONTROLLED First Offence** - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- **Second Offence (within 3 years)** - The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)** - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Term time holidays

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the LA. The LA will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

Appendix 2

Attendance Chart – Impact of absence

