



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. PRINCIPLES AND EXPECTATIONS

- I. At Stockton on the Forest Primary School, we strive for the highest level of attendance from every pupil in order that they develop to their full potential during their time at school. By coming to school every day, on time, children receive the best start in life by having a good education. We expect all children on roll to attend on time, every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.
- II. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend; good attendance is promoted and rewarded, and attendance for individuals is monitored in order to identify trends or persistent absenteeism. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes toward school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy, safe and welcoming place for everyone.
- III. We make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- IV. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure that we keep an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register also indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. DEFINITIONS

I. **Authorised absence**

An absence is authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent / carer E.g. if a child has been unwell and school receives a phone call /written note. Only a school can make an absence authorised. Parents / carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents / carers will be classified as authorised e.g. if a parent was to take a child out of school to go shopping during school hours.

II. **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the headteacher.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are reported to parents annually and the Department for Education three times a year. These are held on a pupil's school record throughout their school life.

The headteacher may consult with the Local Authority regarding the action to take over unauthorised absences.

Please note: Parents can be given a fixed penalty notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence. Any parent issued with such a notice will be subject to a prompt fine of either £60 per parent per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120 per parent per child (if paid after the 21st day but within 28 days) Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to lead to prosecution

3. ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

If a child is absent, **parents/carers** should inform school of a child's absence and the reasons for the absence by:

- Making a phone call prior to 9:30am on the day of a child's absence explaining the child is ill;
- Sending a note in advance advising of a medical appointment.
- Sending a letter to school on the child's return outlining specifically the reason for the absence, and/or the exact nature of the illness

If a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which informs the school office of the absence. Office staff will endeavour to contact the parent/carer if school has not already received notification – this is to establish the whereabouts of the child and therefore ensure his/her safety.

For this reason, a written note on the day of a child's return to school is not ideal.

4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At Stockton on the Forest Primary, we believe that children should be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best possible progress with their learning. However, we do understand that there are, very occasionally, circumstances where a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence.

Time off for leave of absence for any reason, including family holidays is not an automatic right.

Schools are expected **not to authorise** requests for **family holidays** unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Examples of 'Exceptional Circumstance'

- Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal effect to the pupil's education **Supporting evidence should be provided in relation to such requests before they can be considered or approved;**
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- Attendance at a religious or civil ceremony (e.g. wedding, christening) involving a close relative/carer (Mother, Father, Grandfather, Grandmother, Sibling, Aunt, Uncle, Cousin) and reasonable travel time;
- Compassionate reasons e.g. funeral, hospital visit;
- Attendance at the graduation ceremony of a close relative (Mother, Father, Sibling, Main Carer);
- A day for visiting another school;
- Representing city, county or country at a national or international level in sport, music or the arts where selected to do so by a recognised authority, including reasonable travel time.
- Attendance at a regional or national event organised by a recognised youth organisation e.g. scouting, guiding, armed forces cadets etc where there are clear educational and/or social and emotional benefits to the child from participating
- Any other circumstances that the headteacher and attendance governor considers to be exceptional.

It is also expected that headteachers **will not authorise leave** where the following apply:-

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday
- Period overlaps with beginning or end of term
- Shopping trips;
- Theatre visits;
- Participating in or travel time to 'open entry' sport, music or arts events i.e. those not involving selection by an external body;
- Days off to meet visiting relatives.
- Birthday treats or attending the birthdays of relatives

When considering requests to authorise leave headteachers cannot have regard to any expenditure which may have already arisen prior to the request e.g. booked flights, hotel room, ticket purchase etc and will not be responsible for any loss of expenditure arising from leave not being granted.

Parents / carers should contact school in advance to request any leave of absence which should be made in writing. At Stockton on the Forest Primary School, we ask that at least 14 days' notice is given in order for your request to be processed by the school office.

Whilst the application must be made by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with, there is no restriction on who the leave is taken with. This is a matter for the parent(s) not the school.

We treat each request for leave of absence on an individual basis taking account of the following criteria:

- the exceptional circumstances outlined in the request; along with
- the amount of time requested;
- age of the pupil;
 - the pupil's general absence/attendance record (*Pupils should have at least 95% attendance for the current year before authorisation would usually be considered*);
- proximity of SATs and public examinations (*No leave for holidays will be authorised for children in Year 6 prior to the Statutory Assessment Tests*);
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil;
- frequency of the activity; and
- when the request was made (*leave must be applied for in advance of taking it/ accepting an invitation*)

Term-time leave of absence requests should be made using the school's Leave of Absence Request Form, available from the school office or downloadable from the school website.

Requests for days off for religious observance will be considered as appropriate.

The headteacher may invite parents in to discuss any proposed leave of absence in term time.

5. LONG-TERM ABSENCE

When a child has an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, we will do all that we can to send material home so that he / she can continue to learn and keep up with school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, we will contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6. REPEATED ABSENCE

We will alert the parent/carer of any child who has a high rate of absence i.e. below 92% at the end of each term. If the child has a growing number of absences, we will invite the parent/carer to visit school to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, we will contact the local authority who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parent / carer understand the seriousness of the situation.

Legal action against any parent / carer who repeatedly fails to accept their responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly will be taken.

7. ATTENDANCE TARGETS

We are required to set attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body, and also by the local authority. The targets should be challenging but realistic and based on attendance figures of previous years. Some consideration is made of attendance figures of similar schools.

8. PUNCTUALITY

Children should arrive at school between 8:45 and 8:55am. Staff are not available to supervise children before this time.

Registration takes place between 8:55 and 9:05am. If children arrive during registration but before 9:15am, they are marked as late. The registers close at 9:15am, therefore, if a child arrives after this time, they will be recorded as 'late after the register has closed' which shows as an absence in the overall attendance figures.

Persistent lateness causes problems for the child, the class and the teacher. Parents should therefore try to ensure that their child arrives in time for the start of school.

9. ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents should:

- Do all they can to ensure their child attends school regularly
- Should work to ensure that their child's attendance rate does not fall below accepted levels
- Inform the school before 09.30am if their child is absent
- Inform the school of the reason for their child's absence
- Apply to the school for leave of absence due to exceptional family circumstance
- Be consulted and supported on overcoming any barriers to good attendance
- May be asked to provide the school with details of medical appointments if their child's attendance falls below certain levels

Teachers will

- Take a register twice a day at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Mark the register with the appropriate absence codes
- Monitor absence rates and lateness
- Report any noticed absence patterns to the head teacher
- Promote the benefits of regular attendance and punctuality to children
- Liaise with parents on attendance related issues.
- Provide children with 'catch up' work where appropriate.

The Headteacher will

- Set high expectations and monitor attendance and attendance data;
- Encourage a whole school approach to monitoring, promoting and rewarding good attendance, keeping parents, governors and all support staff well informed;
- Set targets that encourage regular attendance;
- Report to governors on the matter of attendance
- Ensure that resources are allocated to promoting attendance appropriately.
- Ensure that the authorised and unauthorised absence figures are recorded in the school prospectus.
- Monitor and tackle attendance below 92% and refer any children with attendance concerns to the local authority;
- Develop home-school links and meet with parents if there is concern over a child's attendance.

Office staff will

- Support the class teacher in promoting the benefits of regular attendance to children
- Support the class teacher in the monitoring of absence rates and lateness

- Report any noticed absence patterns to the class teacher.
- Support the class teacher in providing any 'catch up' work for children.
- Contact parents on the first day of absence (School Office) to establish the whereabouts of a child and reasons for absence

Children will:

- Be encouraged to understand the benefits of regular attendance and punctuality
- Have good attendance rewarded
- Be consulted and supported on overcoming any barriers to good attendance
- Be provided with opportunities to 'catch up' on any missed work where appropriate.

The Governors will

- Nominate a named governor for attendance
- Be well informed through the leadership of the Head Teacher and Attendance Governor;
- Support staff in implementing the policy for Attendance;
- Monitor and review the attendance policy and attendance targets.

The Local authority will

- Monitor the attendance data provided by primary schools in a bid to tackle poor attendance amongst children aged 5 to 11.

Reviewed: July/ October 2010 Unchanged

October 2011 – amended

November 2013 – amended to take into account new regulations.

Formally agreed at governors meeting 29/4/14

Reviewed: June 2018