



Attendance Policy

Agreed at (please indicate with a *):

- Full Governing Body Meeting _____*
- Children and Learning Committee Meeting _____
- Resources Committee Meeting _____

Date: 14.11.24 updated

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Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

a) Stamford Green Primary School and Nursery, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

b) Parents/Carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a Penalty Notice.

c) Why is attendance important?

- i. All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school.
- ii. Children are entitled to a full-time education.
- iii. Young children find it very hard to get back into their friendship groups after a period of absence.
- iv. Children who have poor attendance may find it hard to catch up on work they have missed.
- v. School ensures that children have the best start in life and that they are equipped for succeeding both academically and socially. This means that they can achieve in their exams and manage relationships.
- vi. The more school children miss, the harder it is to catch up. Statistics show that 90% of persistent absentees (those with attendance below 90%) fail to achieve five or more good GCSE grades or equivalent.
- vii. Poor examination results limit young people's options. Good school outcomes are the passport into higher education and more life choices.
- viii. Keeping children away from school for no good reason is a criminal offence.

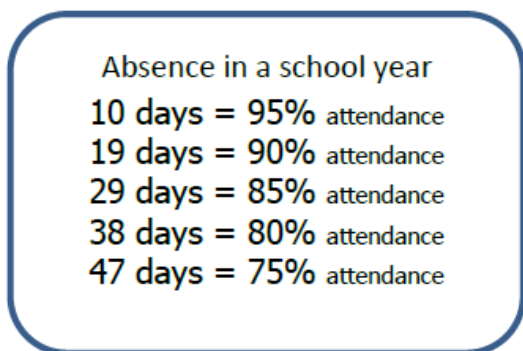
d) Attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive. To manage and improve attendance effectively, Stamford Green will:

- i. Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and work in partnership with families to remove them.
- ii. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- iii. Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify children that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- iv. Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support where possible.

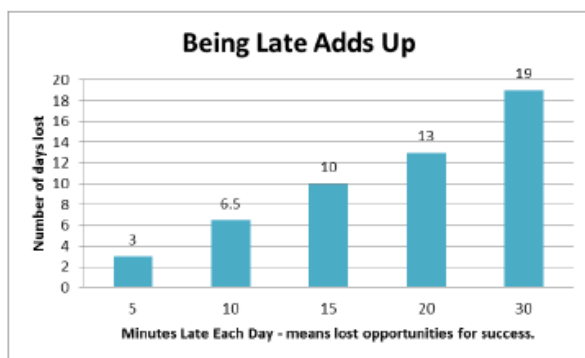
e) As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues families face, we try to work with parent/carers to understand the barrier and provide support. Where that is not successful, or

is not engaged with, the law protects children's rights to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvements.

f)



g)



2. Parental responsibility and the law

- a) Parents/Carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence and could be liable to prosecution or be served with a penalty notice.
- b) Parents/Carers are responsible:
 - i. To ensure that their child attends every day on time.
 - ii. To inform the school by 8.45am if a child will be absent for any reason via the following Google Form and the Parent/Carers are asked to call the absence line every day the child is unable to attend school or include the return date on the Google Form.
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOxzf026XZasoS4dfP26sK9f_zMXD1XZr85kY_HpZYHphVQ/closedform
 - iii. Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child and to ensure that any changes of contact details are communicated promptly.
 - iv. Where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) The Data, Welfare and Attendance Officer (parents@stamford-green.surrey.sch.uk) is responsible for;
- i. Ensuring that the daily registers are complete and accurate.
 - ii. The correct code is used to explain any absence.
- b) Class teachers are responsible for;
- i. Recording attendance accurately and punctually both morning and afternoon session on a daily basis.
 - ii. Encouraging good attendance and punctuality:
 - Children are greeted at the East, West and South gates by a member of staff including people from the Extended Leadership Team. Teachers meet the children at the classroom doors to provide a caring and welcoming learning environment.
 - Late and attendance information is reported to Parents/Carers at Consultation events in the termly school report.
 - Weekly monitoring of children with low attendance of 94% or below. Staff consider what families need to improve attendance.
 - Termly meetings between the Inclusion Officer, Deputy Headteacher: Inclusion and the school's Data, Attendance and Welfare Officer.
 - Awarding 'Annabelle' (the attendance ape) and 'Pepe' (the punctuality puppy) to the class with the least amount of lates and highest attendance during the weekly celebration assembly. The 'winners' will be reported to Parents/Carers in the school newsletter.



- c) The Deputy Headteacher: Inclusion (parents@stamford-green.surrey.sch.uk) is responsible for;
- i. Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
 - ii. Regularly evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
 - iii. Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure that they are followed by all staff.
 - iv. Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
 - v. Some children face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include children who have long term physical or mental health conditions. In these situations, please contact Mrs Dray (Deputy Headteacher: Inclusion – parents@stamford-green.surrey.sch.uk) to discuss.
- d) The Headteacher is responsible for;
- i. Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
 - ii. Communicating the schools' high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels.

- iii. To decide if an absence will be granted for specific circumstances using the [2024 school attendance regulations](#)
- e) The governors are responsible for;
- i. Ensuring that school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
 - ii. Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
 - iii. Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.

4. Registers

- a) Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.
- b) Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.
- c) Please see Appendix 2 for more information on categorisation of absence.
- d) Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - i. The original entry.
 - ii. The amended entry.
 - iii. The reason for the amendment.
 - iv. The date on which the amendment was made.
 - v. The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

5. Registration and Lateness

- a) It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The school day begins at 8.35am, the attendance register will be closed, in the classroom, at 8.45am. The Lower West Gate and East Gate will close at 8.40am.
- b) Any child arriving at the East Gate or Lower West Gate between 8.45am and 9.15am will be signed in by a member of staff and recorded as late.
- c) The register will be taken at 8.45am. If a child arrives after 9.15am without an exceptional reason (See appendix 4), this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. The pupil's name, and the time of arrival will be recorded using Inventry.
- d) In cases of persistent late arrival to school, along with advice from the Inclusion Officer, the school will use the improvement system outlined in section 6 of this policy. If there is no

improvement parents will be required to attend a panel meeting to explore strategies to improve promptness.

- e) In order to improve punctuality, all lateness will be reviewed at the weekly class teacher meeting.

6. Responding to Non-Attendance

- a) When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond by doing one or more of the following:
 - i. If no Google Form or telephone call is received from the Parent/Carer by 8.45am, the school's Data, Attendance and Welfare Officer will contact them or the other emergency contacts held by the school until we get a response and know that the child is safe.
 - ii. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the reason for absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
 - iii. If there is no response from any of the contacts held by the school, the Leadership and Management Team will be informed and this will result in a home visit to ascertain that the child is safe.
 - iv. If there is no response from a home visit, all efforts will be made to establish the safety and wellbeing of the children. This may involve working with other agencies e.g. The police.
 - v. In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority.
 - vi. For any children whose families are known, by the school, to be currently working in partnership with Children's Services an additional phone call to the named Social Worker/Family Support Worker will also be made. Equally for any children where the school has significant concerns, that are not currently working in partnership with Children's Services, an additional phone call into Children's Single point of Access (C-Spa) is likely to be made. The School may also seek further advice from the Inclusion Officer and/or any other professional service they feel is appropriate.

7. Improving Attendance

- a) Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the Parents/Carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and can make things worse in the long run.
- b) In order to improve attendance, the following system will be used:
 - i. All absences will be reviewed at a Class Teacher meeting weekly.
 - ii. If a child's absence is below 94%, families may be contacted to identify that the child is at risk of being a persistent absentee and target attendance improvement.
 - iii. If the attendance does not improve after a two-week monitoring period, the class teacher will communicate with parent/carers to discuss any issues and explore why absences are ongoing. A written record of the discussion will be made.
 - iv. The absence will be monitored for another two week period. If the absences are continuing parent/carers will be invited in writing to an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM). An attendance contract will be created to improve attendance.
 - v. The contract will be reviewed by the class teacher and a review meeting with parent/carers will take place.

- c) Schools can make a referral to the Surrey Attendance Service for consideration of legal intervention where:
- i. Pupil attendance is below 90% and
 - ii. There are 10 unauthorised session in the preceding 10 weeks.
 - iii. Within the 8 school weeks prior to referral, schools must be able to evidence that Parent(s)/Carer(s) have been offered a meeting, in writing, stating a specific time and date for the meeting AND providing parents with at least 7 days' notice in advance of the scheduled meeting. Following the scheduled meeting (whether attended by parent/s or not), a letter has been sent to parent(s)/carer(s) advising that attendance remains an ongoing concern and a referral to the Local Authority will be made for consideration for legal intervention.

8. Persistent Absence

- a) A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 19 days (10% absence) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence of this nature has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need Parents'/Carers' full support and co-operation to address and improve attendance.
- b) The DfE and the Local Authority monitor the levels of persistent absence in all schools.

9. Exceptional Leave of Absence

- a) All holiday requests will be considered to be an unauthorised leave of absence by the Headteacher unless there are exceptional circumstances (See appendix 4). Any appeal will be heard by the Governing Body, whose decision will be final.
- b) All other requests for leave will be considered on a case by case basis by the Headteacher and must be exceptional circumstances (See Appendix 4). Again, in the case of an appeal, the decision of the Governing Body will be final.
- c) If a family needs to request a leave of absence in term-time, then a letter must be addressed to the Headteacher (parents@stamford-green.surrey.sch.uk) and preferably with at least two weeks' notice. All adults with parental responsibility must be aware of the request being submitted.

10. Dental and medical treatments

- a) Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, Parents/Carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.
- b) Please be aware that if appointments fall when the register is due to be taken then this will count as an absence.

11. Inclusion Officer

An Inclusion Officer is provided by the Local Authority and supports schools. The Inclusion Officer monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. They will work with school staff to promote good attendance.

12. Local Education Authority Truancy Patrols

- a) A family comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol via the Inclusion Officer through local patrols, the child's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding four months, a warning letter may be sent to the Parents/Carers.

If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each Parent/Carer.

- b) The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:
- i. £160, with a reduction to £80 if paid within 21 days (See Appendix 1)
 - ii. See National Framework for Penalty Notices (from page 56) with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>)

13. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Appendix 1 – Penalty Notices

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above), parents/carers will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure

to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Appendix 2 – Categorisation of absence and attendance codes

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

a) Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided (after a period of 10 school days from the date the absence took place), or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- i. Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- ii. Absences which have never been properly explained
- iii. Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- iv. Excessive illness without medical evidence
- v. Any absence which has not been explained by the parent by 10.00am

b) Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

c) Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- i. Work experience placements
- ii. Field trips and educational visits
- iii. Sporting activities
- iv. Link courses or approved education off site
- v. Most types of dual registration

Register Completion

All pupils must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|---|--|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity <i>The B code cannot be</i> |

| | | |
|------------|--|---|
| | | <i>used for pupils who are receiving online learning within the home.</i> |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| C1* | Leave of absence for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad. | Authorised absence |
| C2* | Leave of absence for a child on a part time timetable | Authorised absence. Part time timetables should only be used as temporary measure and parental consent is required. The timetable should be frequently reviewed. Unauthorised sessions should be recorded if the child fails to attend expected sessions. |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Not counted in possible attendances |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| K* | Alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority to ensure Section 19 duties met. | Approved alternative provider |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| Q* | Unable to attend to lack of access arrangements | Authorised absence. Implications for LA as they have responsibility |

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| | | to expedite access and must consider safeguarding risks. |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y1* | Normal transport arrangements unavailable | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y2* | Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y3* | Unable to attend due to part of school premises being closed | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y4* | Unable to attend due to whole school unexpectedly being closed | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y5* | Unable to attend due to being criminally detained | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y6* | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance, or law | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y7* | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

*Attendance coding changed August 2024

Appendix 2

Attendance Agreement

| Name | Class | Class Teacher |
|------|-------|---------------|
| | | |

At Stamford Green, we believe that excellent attendance is essential to a child's success at school. With this in mind, in some cases, where there has been historical low attendance, we specify an attendance contract for parents and children. The aim of the agreement is to:

- Ensure that parents/carers and their children are clear about the expectations for attendance.
- Ensure that parents/carers are clear that Stamford Green takes attendance seriously and will use the full support system, including issuing fixed penalty notices.
- Adhere to our School Attendance Policy
<https://www.stamford-green.surrey.sch.uk/page/?title=Policies+and+Procedures&pid=76>

Parent/Carers

I/we will:

- ensure that my/our child always arrives to school on time (8.35am to 8.40am)
- ensure that my/our child achieves a minimum of 97% attendance and support the school with its efforts to improve levels of attendance and punctuality.
- ensure that I/we inform the school by 8.45am if my/our child will be absent for any reason via the following Google Form and the Parent/Carers are asked to call the absence line every day the child is unable to attend school or include the return date on the Google Form.
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeeQRTatM4vbnP1EzBsawCvvpPJAwEBxPBQinwgX0o-BTRElw/viewform>

Chronology Summary:

| Date | Attendance Percentage | Attended by | Comments/Record of Meeting |
|------|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
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| | | | |
| | | | |
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Concerns:

What are the issues preventing the child from attending school regularly?

Medical / Friendships / Academic progress / Transport

Review Meeting:

Date:

Comments:

| Attendance Percentage | Detail | Impact |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 97% - 100% Attendance | Very few days will have been missed. | Excellent attendance. Your child has the best chance of success and making progress academically and socially. |
| 93% - 96.9% Attendance | At the end of the school year your child will have missed nine days learning. | Fair attendance. Your child's school will be worried as progress might be limited. |
| 85.1% - 92.9% Attendance | Your child is having, on average, one day off every other week. | Poor attendance. Your child's school will be increasingly concerned as progress will be limited due to lessons missed. A referral to Inclusion Officer will be made. |
| Below 85% Attendance | At the end of the school year, your child will have missed eighteen days of learning. This equates to three days a month. | Very poor attendance. Your child's school will be seriously concerned as progress against the curriculum will be severely limited. A referral to Inclusion Officer will have been made. |

I confirm that this Attendance Agreement was agreed by all present.

Signed:

..... Parent/carer

..... Child

..... Class Teacher

..... Member of Extended Leadership Team

Appendix 3

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families.

All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or issue a penalty notice.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Appendix 4

Exceptional circumstances

This information clarifies the meaning of 'exceptional circumstances' at Stamford Green and outlines some principles that are used in the decision making process.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short' and had to be taken at that particular time rather than during the school holidays.

Guiding principles

1. School days in term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days of holiday to spend time together. The Headteacher will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
2. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.
3. Below are a few examples of where exceptional circumstances may be considered.
 - a) When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family members' bereavement, life threatening or serious illness.
 - b) Funeral of a family member or close family friend. One day's travel will also be authorised if the funeral is not local.
 - c) Children of service personnel about to go on deployment.
 - d) Wedding day of an immediate family member.
 - e) Absences for important religious observances are taken into account, but only for the ceremony and not for extended leave.
4. Below are a few examples of where exceptional circumstances will not be authorised.
 - a) Holidays or other travel, including as a result of parental work commitments.
 - b) Absence which is taken because of the availability of parent/carer annual leave or cheaper fares or other costs are not regarded as exceptional circumstances.
 - c) Claims of illness of the child, as a reason for a delayed return, particularly after normal school holidays.