



Attendance Policy

Agreed at (please indicate with a *):

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

Date: 1.7.19

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Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

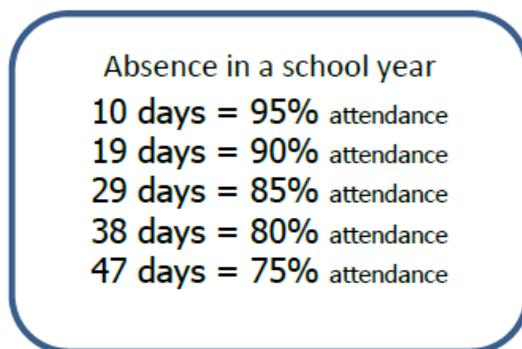
a) Stamford Green Primary School and Nursery, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early 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.

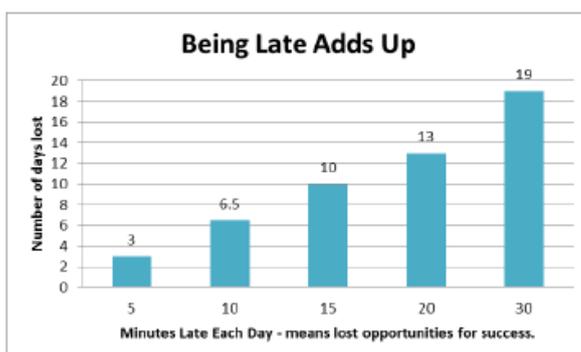
c) Why is attendance important?

- I. Young children find it very hard to get back into their friendship groups after a period of absence.
- II. Children who have poor attendance may find it hard to catch up on work they have missed.
- III. 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.
- IV. 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 5 or more good GCSE grades or equivalent.
- V. Poor examination results limit young people's options. Good school outcomes are the passport into higher education and more life choices.
- VI. Keeping children away from school for no good reason is a criminal offence.

d)



e)



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 under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

3. 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 1 for more information on categorisation of absence.

4. Registration and Lateness

- a) It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. Children can arrive from 8.40am, the attendance register will be taken at 8.55am. To ensure children are in class for the register at 8.55am, the West and East Gates will close at 8.50am.
- b) Any child arriving between 8.50am and 8.55am will be informally recorded in the late book in case of fire.
- c) The register will close at 8.55am, and if a child arrives after the bell at 8.55am it will be recorded 'as late after bell'. If a child arrives without a valid reason after 9.10am this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. The pupil's name, and the time of arrival will be recorded in the late book in case of a fire.
- d) In cases of persistent late arrival to school, along with advice from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) 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 the following system will be used:
 - i. All lateness will be reviewed at a Leadership and Management Team (LMT) meeting fortnightly.
 - ii. If a child is late on 5 separate occasions the LMT will decide who needs support to improve.
 - iii. This will be through context based individual targets. These targets will be shared with families at a Punctuality Improvement Meeting (PIM) with the child's class teacher and member of the LMT.
 - iv. Follow up phone calls by a member of the LMT will be made to families who have been to an Punctuality Improvement Meeting (PIM) to say well done and also for a new target to be set or to decide a new target if the previous one hasn't been achieved.

5. Responding To Non-Attendance

- a) It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school by 8.55am if a child will be absent for any reason.
- b) When a pupil does not attend school we will respond by doing one or more of the following:
 - i. If no letter or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 8.55am, 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 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.
 - iii. 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. police.
 - iv. In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority.
 - v. Parents are asked to call the absence line every day the child is unable to attend school.
 - vi. For any children whose family 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 'MASH' (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) is likely to be made. The School may also seek further advice from the Educational Welfare team and/or any other professional service they feel is appropriate.

6. 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 sorted out between the school, the parents 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 usually makes things worse.
- b) In order to improve attendance the following system will be used:
 - i. All absences will be reviewed at an LMT meeting fortnightly.
 - ii. If a child's absence is below 97% the LMT will decide who needs support to improve.
 - iii. This will be through context based individual targets e.g. not one off illnesses. These targets will be shared with families at an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with the child's class teacher and member of the LMT.
 - iv. To promote attendance at school half termly attendance stickers will be given out in class to children if their attendance is 97% or above or individual AIM targets have been met.
 - v. Follow up phone calls by a member of the LMT will be made to families who have been to an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) to say well done and also for a new target to be set or to decide a new target if the previous one hasn't been achieved.

- vi. If, after the AIM system there is still a deteriorating attendance situation, then a house call will be made by HT/DHTs to ascertain the reason for absence on the day and to offer support.
- c) The school's Education Welfare Officer meets with school staff on a regular basis to discuss attendance concerns. If the school is unsuccessful in resolving any attendance issues the school will refer families to the Education Welfare Officer for support.

7. Persistent Absence

- a) A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% 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' 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.
- c) The AIM system outlined in section 6 will be used to reduce persistent absence.

8. Exceptional Leave of Absence

- a) All holiday requests will be considered to be an unauthorised leave of absence by the Headteacher. 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 e.g. compassionate reasons. Again, in the case of an appeal, the decision of the Governing Body will be final.
- c) Even in cases where "exceptional circumstances" do apply, authorisation will be considered within the context of the child's previous attendance and that the request does not exceed 10 school days in any one academic year. Exceptional Circumstances will not be applied where the absence would result in the child's missing 10% or more schooling across the year; as this would classify them as a Persistent Absentee. Exceptional Circumstances alone do not guarantee authorisation.
- d) If a family needs to request a leave of absence in term-time, then a letter must be addressed to the Headteacher and preferably with at least two weeks' notice. All adults with parental responsibility must be aware of the request being submitted.
- e) Any child that is absent from school because they are on holiday for more than 20 consecutive school days will be taken off roll.

9. 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.

10. Education Welfare Service

- a) The Education Welfare Service is provided by the Local Education Authority and supports schools, parents and young people and deals with non-attendance. The aim of Education Welfare is for every child to have an equal opportunity to access educational provision and ensure parents meet their parental responsibilities under the various Education Acts. Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.
- b) If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution or consider an Education Supervision Order.
- c) Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

11. Local Education Authority Truancy Patrols

- a) When a family comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol either via the Education Welfare Officers (see Section 10) or through local patrols, the child's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 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. £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
 - ii. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

12. Roles and responsibilities

- a) All staff should encourage good attendance and punctuality through:
 - i. Providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
 - ii. Reporting late and attendance information to parents/carers on parents' evening and in the annual school report.
 - iii. By celebrating regular attendance every half term. See section 6 b) iv in this policy.
 - iv. Regular communication with parents/carers and children.
 - v. Regular meetings between the EWO and the school's Data, Attendance and Welfare Officer.
 - vi. 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.
 - vii. Accurate and punctual completion of registers.
- b) The Governing body and Headteacher promote the attendance policy and ensure that it is implemented effectively. They ensure that school has a system to reward good attendance and punctuality.

Appendix 1 – Categorisation of absence and attendance codes

1) 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:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- 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:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

2) 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
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	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
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
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



APPENDIX 2 Absence Letter

3 July 2019

Dear,

Name's learning is being affected by poor attendance

We understand that from time to time children are ill or may need time off for important medical appointments. However, although sometimes children can be reluctant to attend school. In these circumstances, it is important to work with the school and the child to solve any issues. Please see the table below which shows the negative impact that poor attendance has on friendships and learning.

Following a visit from our Surrey County Council's Education Welfare Officer, Name's attendance was discussed because his/her attendance is currently at **x%**.

If **Name's** attendance does not show an improvement over the next four weeks, you may be invited to an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with a member of the Leadership and Management Team and your child's class teacher.

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 to poor 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 to fair attendance. Your child's school will be increasingly concerned as progress will be limited due to lessons missed. A referral to Education Welfare 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 Education Welfare Officer will have been made.

If there is anything that we can do to help you support your child's attendance please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Druce
Headteacher

Attendance Action Flow Chart

