




Policy for Attendance

Approved by	FGB
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Review date	No later than May 2022
Headteacher	

Signed...Catherine Williamson... Role...CoG.....

Ownership: FGB

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Attendance action timeline

At Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School we believe that regular and punctual attendance is a prerequisite to developing well-motivated pupils with a positive attitude towards their learning and who take a pride in their school. At Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School we have an ethos that demonstrates to pupils, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance. Term times are for education as stipulated by the Government. The School's default position is not to authorise any absence unless for an exceptional reason.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure good attendance and punctuality for all pupils. It sets out the school's procedures for managing, recording and monitoring attendance, including details of how we will work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant support agencies. We have this policy in order to promote and prepare children for life in modern Britain.

Statutory Duties

The Education Act 1996 requires that all parents secure full time education for any child of compulsory school age (5 – 16). Schools must record attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon. All attendance records must be recorded onto a register, which at Stockbridge Primary School, is managed on a computer system.

Pre-School

As children of pre-school are not at compulsory school age, this policy does not wholly apply to them. However, a daily record is kept of attendance and absence **as this is a key safeguarding overview of the child's wellbeing.**

School responsibility for attendance

In order to achieve the aims above, the school will:-

- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance through regular updates on attendance in the newsletter (at least once a half term).
- Promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere in school, where children feel safe and that their presence is valued.
- Enable parents to feel that their support of this Policy is recognised by the school as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Create attitudes towards high standards of punctuality and attendance, which pupils should retain throughout life.
- Ensure that attendance is maintained effectively and absences are followed up promptly.
- Meet legal requirements, with particular reference to identifying authorised absence.
- Check registers regularly, to note absences and identify patterns of absence and lateness, if they are occurring.
- If absence/punctuality becomes a matter for concern, use agreed strategies in order to raise parental awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality, so that they will make more effort to ensure that their child attends school punctually and regularly.

- Involve other agencies when difficulties arise, and the school needs extra support or help as appropriate e.g. the Education Welfare Service, Education Psychology Service, Social Services.
- Ensure information on attendance/punctuality is available for Governors, as required.
- Ensure all staff are aware of school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure good liaison when a change of school occurs.
- Develop incentives for good and maximum attendance.

Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

It is vital that children enjoy coming into school. While being encouraged to attend regularly and on time, they will not be blamed or made to feel unhappy if their parents/carers are not supportive or effective in this area. A parent/carer's commitment to their child's attendance is detailed in the Home/School Agreement, which every family signs and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Registers

Registers will be checked by the Admin Officer and Admin assistant for regular attendance. They will give a print out of absence **every fortnight** on a Monday, for the **previous 2 weeks**, to the Headteacher. Teachers should also be aware and report any concerns they may have to the Headteacher.

Registers are taken within the first ten minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions (between 08:50 and 09:00 and between 13:00 and 13:10).

Registers are entered directly **by the Class teacher onto Arbor then checked by the admin team each morning**. Teachers mark present/absent **and the school office then complete and follow up on any absence** **Fortnightly** absence reports are printed and reasons for absence subsequently recorded using the relevant codes as below:-

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| C | Other authorised circumstances |
| I | Illness |
| L | Late (before reg closed) |
| H | Annual family holiday |
| M | Medical/dental |
| U | Late (after reg) with reason |

(please note, the complete list is in Appendix A and in the front of every register)

Absence

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

Authorised (Where the school approves the pupil absence)

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons

- Illness, medical or dental appointments;
- Days of religious observance;
- Exclusion;
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parent's employment;
- Family bereavement;
- Involvement in a public performance;
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis).

• *Unauthorised (where the school will not approve the absence)*

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Parents will be made aware that the school has the right to authorise or refuse to authorise absences and that the ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher.

Parents are asked to telephone school or to send a note if their child is ill and when possible to let us know as to how long they expect their child to be away; daily telephone calls are not then necessary. Parents can also notify us via the school app, available for download from the Android store or iTunes by searching for 'Stockbridge Primary Hampshire'. A note will be put in the appropriate register to inform the class teacher of the reason for the child's absence on that morning so that the class teacher knows why a pupil is absent. For safeguarding purposes, if there is no contact from home before 09.30am, the admin assistant will call the family to find out the reason for their absence and check the child is safe.

When the weekly absence report shows that a child has been absent without explanation, parents will be sent a letter requiring a reason to be given. If no satisfactory response is received the parents will be invited to meet with the Headteacher to explain the absence.

During fortnightly monitoring, the Admin Assistant and Headteacher will review attendance rates, looking specifically out for children whose attendance is unexplained or under the national average.

Letters will be issued half termly, in the last week of the term as follows;

- Children who have an attendance rate at or above 96% will not receive any letters.
- Children who have an attendance rate below 96% receive attendance letter 1 (**Appendix A**)
- Children who received letter 1 and whose attendance has not improved, receive letter 2 (**Appendix B**)
- For children whose attendance falls below 90% (defined by the DfE as persistently absent), they will receive letter 3 (**Appendix C**)

For any child whose attendance falls below 94%, and the vast majority is for illness or medical related reasons where there is not a serious medical issue (ie. not referred or under the care of a consultant), all absence will be coded as unauthorised pending letters from Doctors or consultants or other medical evidence.

If a child's absence continues and is below 90%, an attendance action plan will be put into place with clear expectations and consequences. If attendance does not improve, the family may be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel and legal measures taken. For more information on this step, please read the section below on persistent absenteeism.

Children who are off for medical reasons and under the care of a consultant, will be considered to require measures set out in DfE guidance document 'Supporting Children with medical conditions at school' (**Appendix D**) which places the imperative on schools to work with parents to find suitable ways of educating and supporting children who are under the care of a health professional.

This is not a policy based on numbers but based on the need for all children to be at school as much as possible so that they develop a flow of learning, can get engrossed in their topics and take a full and active part in school life.

Persistent absenteeism

A child is classed as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of any available taught sessions with 1 session being equal to half a day. This means that their attendance rate will sit at 90% or below. Any attendance rate this low represents significant absence which is likely to affect a child's outcomes and is not tolerated by the school or Hampshire County Council unless there is a significant reason eg. medical grounds, in which case, other arrangements for school should be made in line with national guidance in 'Supporting children with medical conditions in schools' Dec 2015.

If a child has attendance of 90% or less, the school will be in direct contact with the parents in accordance as detailed above.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered where there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

- 1 The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
- 2 The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- prosecution.

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.

Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Hampshire's *Code of conduct*

The *Code of conduct* states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes *G*, *U* or *O* on the register)
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

Legal measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parents/ carers' request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- 1 non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
- 2 a holiday that has been taken without permission

and the unauthorised absence (coded *G*) is for 10 or more sessions (five days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued.

If a child has other types of unauthorised absence (coded *O* and *U*) and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 1 **10 sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week school period**
- 2 **one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each

parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.

Punctuality

School begins at 09:00 however pupils can arrive at school from 08:45 where there will be an adult on duty on the playground. No child should be on the playground, unsupervised before this time neither should they be dropped at the school office before this time where they would also be unsupervised. If children arrive at school before 08:45, they will join Breakfast club which incurs the fee of £4 per day. This ensures that we know they are with an adult and being safely supervised.

Children arriving after 09:00 should report to the school office where they are required to be signed in as late; the registers will have closed at this point. Parents of children who persistently arrive late should be approached and encouraged to ensure that their child arrives at school promptly. This may be done initially by the class teacher and subsequently by the Headteacher. It should be explained that any form of lateness is sufficient to interrupt the education of not only their child but also of others in the class.

If a child arrives 20 minutes or more late (after 09:10), with no valid reason given by the parent, this will constitute an unauthorised absence.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know in advance.

If the child has a regular pattern of lateness, a note will be sent to the parents (**Appendix E**) asking them either to come into school and explain if there is a difficulty causing lateness, or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances, if the school is aware of the situation, an arrangement allowing some flexibility can be agreed with the Headteacher.

Repeated unexplained lateness, or lateness with no acceptable reason, will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and the Social Services, if relevant who may issue a penalty notice or prosecution under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

Holidays

The education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013 removed the reference to holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory 10 days. Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school every day. There is no longer any discretionary allowance for family holidays during term time.

An application for 'Leave of Absence' is not the same as a 'holiday request'. Leave of absence for family celebrations is not likely to be authorised. The appropriate form requesting the Headteacher's authorisation of absence can be found in **Appendix F**. Parents should note however, that if the holiday is unauthorised by the headteacher, this form acts as a Penalty Notice Warning should there be any unauthorised absence during this period of time.

Exceptional circumstances

Schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Similar to the world of work, pupils should only be absent or late to school when they are ill or for medication or dental appointments, where these cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Requests for absence relating to affordability of holidays will never be authorised. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence – holidays therefore are not considered an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances are at the discretion of the Headteacher who must satisfy themselves that the circumstances warrant granting of leave. If granting leave, the Headteacher will determine the number of days to be authorised which should not exceed a maximum of 5 during the school year for any pupil.

Family visits

Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours.

Bereavement

Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave. We understand that families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

Religious observances

Religious holidays and observances are an important part of a child's culture and heritage. Absence for these are often authorised but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for a one-off situation rather than a regular occurring event.

Service families

Absences may be authorised for families of service personnel if they are returning from, or about to depart on, a long operational tour (of more than 1 month) that prevents contact during scheduled holiday time. The Armed Forces Covenant does not grant automatic right to take children out of school unless in exceptional circumstances.

Should the parents decide to take the children out of school regardless of the Headteacher's decision, the pupil's absence must be recorded as unauthorised using the appropriate registration

code. The parent is then committing an offence and may be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

All unauthorised and authorised absences will be noted on the child's school record and annual reports to parents.

The attendance action timeline (**Appendix G**) details the process for any absence, including unauthorised absence.

Statistics

Attendance information is recorded on the admin computer based on the paper records taken by teachers at the beginning of each session.

Individual pupil school attendance reports are produced annually for parents and for **children's** records.

An overview of attendance is kept and the records of pupils giving cause for concern, i.e. below 90%, are produced and the reasons investigated.

It is the intention of the school and its Governing Body to comply with the advice, framework and general principles set out in the Hampshire LA Document 'Promoting pupil attendance and recording absence' – March 2014 (Appendix D) to be read in conjunction with the DfE 'Advice on school attendance' – January 2014.

12th April 2019

APPENDIX A: Letter 1

Dear

Re: xxx attendance

As you will know, we place great value on a child's attendance at school. Looking at our attendance figures recently, we are concerned to note that xxx attendance percentage for this academic year to 29.03.19 is xxx%. This figure is below the government's acceptable guidelines of xx%.

Far from this being a 'numbers game' to please external inspections, I am very concerned that your child is missing chunks of their learning which will lead to gaps opening up and being hard to fill.

Regular attendance is important for xxxx progress in school and your support in this matter is very much appreciated. I am enclosing a leaflet which is called 'The Good School Attendance Guide' which outlines all of the reasons that your child needs to make the most out of their school experience.

If you are concerned about sending you child in if they are feeling unwell, please be reassured that we will contact you during the day to update you if they take a turn for the worse or are not wholly themselves.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Jefferies
Headteacher

12th April 2019

APPENDIX B: Letter 2

Dear

Re: xxx attendance

This letter follows up on the letter sent to you on 02.02.19.

We are concerned to note that xxx attendance has not improved since our last letter and is currently xx% which is below the government's expectations for children in school. As highlighted before, regular attendance is important for xxx progress in school and the progress in their learning is suffering due to absences.

We would like to offer you support to improve xxx attendance, therefore, I ask you to contact Mrs Millen or Mrs Spayes in the office to arrange a meeting with myself as soon as possible and before 02.02.19.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Jefferies
Headteacher

12th April 2019 **APPENDIX C: Letter 3**

Dear

Re: xxx persistent absence

This letter follows up on the letters sent to you on 02.02.19 and 02.02.19.

I am writing on behalf of the Local Authority to remind you of the attendance definition imposed by the Government regarding Persistent Absence. As of September 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that any student whose attendance falls below 90% will be classed as a Persistently Absent student. Therefore, if a student misses 19 or more days over an academic year, they will be classed as Persistently Absent.

Looking at our attendance figures recently, we note that xx's attendance percentage for this academic year to 02.02.19 is xxx%. This is well below the government's acceptable guidelines of 96% and falls into the category of Persistent Absenteeism.

The school is required to take action should a student's attendance become a cause for concern. Such action may include a penalty notice and possible prosecution by the Local Authority.

At this stage, we are obliged to bring the matter to your attention, even though we do appreciate that you are no doubt aware of the situation.

We will need to meet and draw up an action plan to improve attendance, please make contact with the school office who will arrange a meeting for us to do this within the next 5 working days.

In addition to this, all absence, even that for illness, will now be recorded as unauthorised unless accompanied by a note from the school nurse, GP or consultant. If your child is under the care of a consultant, and the reason for absence relates to a medical condition they have, we will consider this during our action planning and use the DfE document 'Supporting children with medical conditions' in our targets.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Jefferies
Headteacher

12th April 2019

APPENDIX E: Lateness letter

Dear

Re: xxx lateness

We have noticed that xxx attendance percentage for this academic year up to 02.02.19 is xx% which is below the government's acceptable guidelines of 96%.

AND/OR

As part of my leadership role, I monitor attendance and punctuality carefully. I am on the front desk or door most days of the week and have noticed through this role and the signing in book that your child/ren have been late on a number of occasions (x out of x in the last x).

Far from this being a 'numbers game' to please external inspections, I am very concerned that your child is missing key elements of their day. The first 20 minutes is devoted to mental recall of times tables or handwriting learning or spelling rehearsal – the kind of learning that neither you nor we get enough time to do in and out of school without really protecting that time carefully. Also it can be detrimental to your child's confidence and self-esteem if they are frequently missing parts of their learning or walking into a classroom when everyone else is already settled and getting on.

We work in partnership with our parents and pride ourselves on this so if there is anything I or your child's class teacher can do to encourage good punctuality, please do not hesitate to say – this could be from an early morning phone call if your child doesn't like getting out of bed, through to helping get them from the car if they are reluctant to leave you. If you feel that there are wider issues underlying why they are coming in late, we would welcome a discussion on these.

At this stage, we are obliged to bring the matter to your attention even though we do appreciate that you are no doubt aware of the situation.

We expect there to be a rapid and sustained improvement in xxx's punctuality within the next 5 days which continues for the remainder of this term and throughout the year.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Jefferies
Headteacher

APPENDIX G

ATTENDANCE ACTION TIMELINE

Action	Who?	When?
FGB to approve the attendance policy	FGB	17 May 2021
Send out general attendance leaflet and publish policy on the website.	HT	21 May 2021
Attendance letters monitored each fortnight	HT& AA	Half termly from w/b24 May 2021

Weekly procedure thereafter:

If child is absent, note left in register. Follow up slip sent home/phone calls if no reason given for absence. Reason for absence logged in book and recorded on Arbor personal profile.	AA	Daily
If child not in school, phone home at 9.30am	AA & AO	Daily
Printout of overview of attendance for each class	AA to HT	Fortnightly Monday
If attendance is less than 96%, AO to send home letter 1. Logged in Arbor & CPOMS	AA	
If attendance is less than 96% and the family sent letter 1 in a previous week, SM to send home letter 2. Log in Arbor & CPOMS	AA	
If attendance is less than 90%, EJ to send out a letter inviting parents for a meeting and outlining next steps; legal intervention etc. Log letter sent out in Arbor & CPOMS	HT AA	
Meeting held with parents Logged in Arbor and CPOMS	HT AA	90% attendance and after letter 2
If no improvement after a fortnight, referral made to Attendance Legal Panel	HT	89.9% or lower
Locality team contacted and referred for penalty notice	HT	10 sessions of continuous unauthorised absence

APPENDIX F

**Do you know your child's attendance figure?
Would you guess it to be above or below 90%?
Is 90% attendance enough?**

Peter is currently in Year R and Jane is in Year 2. Their attendance rates at school are always around 90%.
They think this is pretty good!

90% attendance for Peter = 20 days absence.

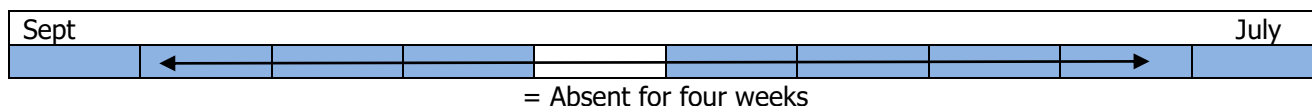
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI

90% attendance means that Peter is absent from lessons for the equivalent of **one half-day every week**
87% attendance for Jane = 25 days absence

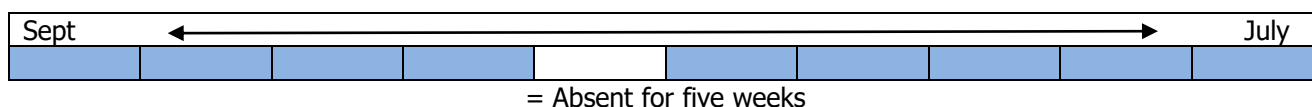
Reasons given...(all genuine – but not necessarily appropriate!)

Five days – annual holiday
Five days – the flu
Two days – Mum unwell
One day – birthday treat
Two days – dentist appointments – 4 afternoon appointments
One day – to buy new shoes
Two days – being late and missed registration 4 mornings
One day – car wouldn't start
Two days – grandparents visiting
Two days – theme park vouchers needed to be used
Two days unauthorised absence – for which no note has been received

In Year R, Peter's 90% attendance rate means that he missed the equivalent of **four whole weeks** of lessons in the school year.



In Year 2, Jane's attendance rate last year was 87%, which means that she missed the equivalent of **five weeks** of lessons in the school year. This represents a whole half term missed.



What does your child's attendance figure mean as learning time lost?

Attendance rate	Approx days absence by end of year	School time lost by end of primary school
100%	0	0
95%	10	14 weeks
90%	20	28 weeks
85%	30	42 weeks
80%	40	56 weeks

There are 38 weeks in a school year!

Is your child's attendance or punctuality rate affecting their performance in school?