

St Stephen's C.E Primary School



Attendance Policy

This policy was agreed by governing body delegation to the CFC Committee (and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area)	
Implemented:	September 2020
Review date:	September 2022



Attendance Policy

This policy provides the framework through which attendance at St. Stephen's is monitored and is consistently good to outstanding. It relates to the aims and values of the school, which are embedded in the strong Christian ethos of St. Stephen's.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent contacts the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3. School Attendance & the Law.

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. Requests must be made on the School's official 'Absence Request Form', which is available from school office.

Procedures

4 If a child is absent

- 4.1 If a child is unwell the parent/guardian needs to let the school know at the earliest opportunity so it can be recorded as an authorised absence on the register.
- 4.2 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which will inform the school office. The office staff will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 4.3 When the child returns to school, a parent or guardian must contact the school to explain the absence if the school has not already been informed.
- 4.4 The school must be contacted prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 4.5 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the school office will immediately contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

5 Requests for leave of absence

- 5.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child e.g. to attend a funeral. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance to request leave.

6 Long-term absence

- 6.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 6.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made to support the child's education.

7 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 7.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be contacted and/or asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the appropriate LA support services.
- 7.2 The Governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their child(ren) to school on a regular basis.

8 Rewards for good attendance

- 8.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an acknowledgement for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. Classes receive an attendance and punctuality reward each half term if their class has the best attendance and/or punctuality.

9 Persistent Absences

- 9.1 The school strives to maintain a high of level attendance above national figures. This is discussed termly at the link governor meetings. Persistent absences are reported termly to the Governors. Action is taken to reduce any persistent absence.

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance and persistent absences. It is reported to the Governors on a termly basis in the Headteacher's Report to Governors. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The Inclusion Manager also reports on attendance as part of termly meetings with the Safeguarding Governor.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the annual governors' report.
- 9.4 The Inclusion Manager will be responsible for monitoring attendance in all year groups, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence or punctuality, this is discussed with the class teacher and Headteacher. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance or punctuality of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- 9.5 This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

11 Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

11.1 Governing Body

It will be the responsibility of the Governors to oversee and monitor the working of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

11.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will monitor and oversee the working of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and procedures. To ensure the inclusion of attendance in the school development programme

11.3 Inclusion Manager

Initiate and monitor procedures for monitoring attendance/lateness.

Ensure all unexplained absences are investigated on the day they occur, or as soon as possible after the absence.

Monitor attendance and lateness on a regular basis and report to Governors on the progress.

Keep staff and children informed of the progress of policy and practice.

Making referrals to EWO when appropriate.

11.4 Class Teacher

Encourage attendance/punctuality by creating a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere.

Keep daily registers and ensure that parents' letters/messages are passed onto the Office Staff as soon as possible.

11.5 School Office Staff

Follow up all unexplained absence/lateness.

Inform the Inclusion Manager of unexplained absence/lateness.

Enter attendance details onto the school MIS system and produce reports as necessary.

11.6 Parents/carers

Ensure full and punctual attendance at school when the child is fit to attend thereby instilling good attendance habits.

Comply with the School's procedures for reporting absence/lateness.

Inform the school of reasons for non-attendance before 9.30 am on the first day of absence.

If any child is to arrive late in school, parents should contact the school office as soon as possible (again before 9.30am).

When the child does arrive late, the parent/carer must accompany the child to the School Office to sign their child in.

Where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or

prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence, will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered.

11.7 Pupils

Children are expected to attend regularly and to be on time for registration and lessons.

Children are expected to arrive at school no later than 9am.

Any child arriving after 9.05 am will go to the school office where the parent/carer will sign them in.

This entry will be registered as a Late Arrival unless prior permission has been sought and approved.

12.0 Education Welfare Service

The school may refer a pupil to Education Welfare Service where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The Education Welfare Service will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

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September 2020

Review:

September 2022