

Attendance Policy

Stoke Holy Cross Primary



Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	Stoke Holy Cross Primary
On:-	Spring 17
Chair of Governors:-	Rev Lyn Marsh
Last updated:-	May 2020

Reviewed: May 2020
Next full review: May 2023

Stoke Holy Cross Primary school is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance> 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance> 2017

<http://legislation.data.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/792/made/data.html> 2016

Each year, school will examine our attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Norfolk attendance targets. The success of this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will include systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

Procedures

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 ('attendance out of school'). Only the Head teacher 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.

Lateness

At Stoke Holy Cross Primary School morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45am. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm and close 5 minutes later.

Pupils arriving after the start of school, but before the end of the registration period, will be treated for statistical purposes as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

First Day Absence

On the first day of an absence parents and carers should contact school before the registration closes. If no contact has been made:

-the Office will endeavour to contact parents or carers as quickly as possible in the morning before 9.30am;

-the Office will transfer information to the registers, alerting the Head teacher or other key staff to any wellbeing or safeguarding issues;

-The school decides whether an absence is agreed or not. Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance;

-If no contact has been established with the family, using all the contact details in order of priority, the Office will seek support from the Children's Services Attendance Team

(NCC Attendance Team 9am-5pm 01603 223 681).

-the Police may be contacted if the school has continuing concerns.

Parents should phone the school **daily** to update us with the reason for absence.

Ten Days' Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days must be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team if the school has concerns. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Frequent and Persistent Absence

It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents and carers. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nursing Team if the problem appears to be a medical one and this course of action is appropriate, and will work in partnership with other health professionals. In other cases the school will seek advice from the School's Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO). Action may include the use of the Fast Track system and/or Fixed Penalty Notices.

Parents of children whose attendance is close to or below the 90% 'Persistent Absence' or have a concerning pattern of attendance (e.g. missing a particular day of the week), will be subject to the following level of informal and then more formal intervention.

1. Letter home to show individual, class and whole school attendance. (Appendix 2)The expectation will be that this will result in a subsequent increase in attendance levels.
2. If the concerns continue a second letter will be issued and an informal meeting will be arranged to discuss how school can support improved attendance.
3. A second meeting will be arranged. It will be made clear that if attendance does not improve, the case will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) for advice. (The advice may be to issue a fast-track referral, a fixed penalty fine or a visit from a school nurse.)
4. Referral to AIO

Leave of absence in term time

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Head teachers may not authorise any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Parents must apply **in advance** for permission using the request for leave of absence form, which can be found on our website. The school will confer where there are siblings in different schools.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced that the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444 (3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”;
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.
- In difficult family situations, the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case. When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child’s current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional (not exhaustive)

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Legal sanctions

The Local Authority has introduced a system for legal intervention which could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice. The level where we can report to county for action to be considered is where:

pupil attendance of 85% or less or with at least 15% unauthorised absence over a 6 week period and/or where children have 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence (5 days)

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment in 21 days. If unpaid, a further invoice for £60 per parent per child is issued; both individual invoices would then have to be paid making a total payment of £120, per parent per child, in 28 days.

Failure to pay the total amount within the timescale can result in legal action being taken.

Our aim of course is to ensure the children in our care receive the most from their education and I know we can count on your support in this matter. However, if you still decide to take your children on holiday during term time, a Pupil Leave of Absence form must still be completed (forms can be found on the school website).

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
 - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
 - Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing school for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; **advanced notice** is required for authorising these absences. Parents should inform the school of such absence by telephone, email or letter. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This could include ensuring that the child is helped to catch up on missed work, if necessary, and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. Information can be added to Pupil Asset, too.

Promoting good attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education and will make clear the links between attendance and attainment.

The Home/School agreement may be used in this way. Newsletters show attendance and minutes lost for each class.

Attendance Awards

The school will reward pupils who have good or improving attendance, in particular through praising the individual child and class, for example, by awarding Head Teacher's Awards for 100% attendance on a termly basis.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The named Governor for attendance is Mr Andy Nicklin.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The attendance officer

The attendance officer is Mrs Ward and she:

- Attends training and briefings to keep up to date
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using and submitting this information to the school office. They are also expected to be proactive in seeking information regarding the attendance of those in their class and responding appropriately.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

The registration system

The School will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. 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/student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised 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	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils/students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil/student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils/students	Not counted in possible attendances

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.
 Electronic back-ups can be made. These need preserving for at least three year.

APPENDIX 1:

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:
 [a] to his age, ability and aptitude; and [b] to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil/student 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/students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

B Authorised absence

This is for those pupils/students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the current legislation and guidance.

C Approved Educational Activity

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

Note: Pupils/students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- Educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

Appendix 2

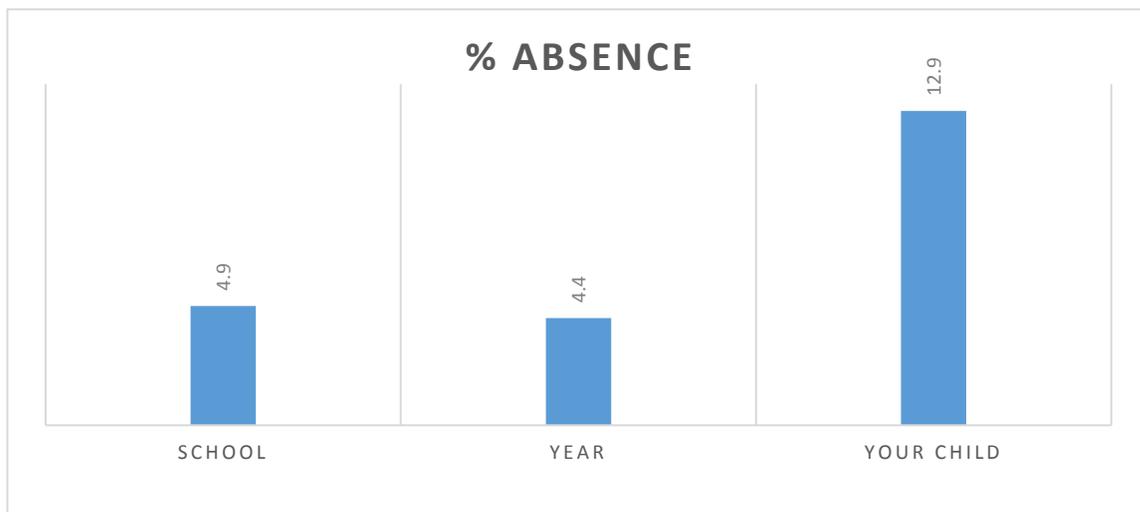
20th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: School Attendance of #####

At Stoke Holy Cross Primary School we strive to improve the attendance of our pupils. Each minute of the school day provides opportunities for learning and it's noticeable when pupils are missing.

has missed XXX of the school year, XXX more than the typical pupil in year X and XXX more than Stoke Holy Cross Primary School as a whole.



We are concerned that if absences continue to occur it will be difficult for ##### to fulfil their learning potential.

I must inform you that further absences may be unauthorised if there is insufficient detail given about the reason or there is a lack of supporting medical evidence e.g. appointment card or slip from GP's surgery (named, dated and timed), a copy of a prescription, label from a medicine bottle, doctor/hospital referral letter etc. **Please be aware that the school does not insist on a medical note.**

Please make every effort to ensure your child's attendance improves. If you have any concerns or issues which impact on your child's attendance, please speak to Mrs Ward in the office, in the first instance or make an appointment to see the Head Teacher.

I look forward to seeing an improvement in attendance.

Yours sincerely

Miss Chaney
Head Teacher