



Footballer



Police Man



Teacher



Doctor



## Attendance Policy

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# Stanton Bridge Primary School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 2021-2023

#### Aims

- To ensure that all children receive their full entitlement to teaching and learning opportunities at Stanton Bridge Primary School, by working in partnership with parents/carers and others to overcome any barriers to their full, punctual attendance.
- To reduce the incidence of unauthorised absence.
- To reward good attendance.
- To monitor attendance/punctuality at a school level and also an individual level.
- To promote good school attendance.
- To enhance provision for children with poor attendance rates through the deployment of learning mentors.

#### Context

The government expectation for attendance is 95%+. 95%+ is deemed to be the level of attendance that gives pupils the greatest opportunity to achieve the best of their potential in school both academically and socially. Anything less than this gives Stanton Bridge Primary School, cause for concern. Stanton Bridge Primary School also acknowledges and seeks to address the possible safeguarding implications of a child's persistent and/or unexplained absence from school. Attendance will be monitored and analysed using the SIMS data available in school. This will be undertaken on a regular basis. School will respond to first day absence with a phone call to the child's home or a visit. Continuing absence, persistent absence or issues of punctuality will result in a letter home. No improvement will then trigger a meeting with a senior member of staff and parents to establish strategies to help and support the family.

The Head Teacher will ensure contact is made with parents where there are concerns over attendance and punctuality. However

- Where there are no firm medical reasons for absence.
- When absence is unauthorised and/or unexplained.
- When absence or lateness gives cause for concern.

School will seek to obtain Early Help Support, this will be done in conjunction with the Local Authority through the Early Help Team whose role it is to monitor and support children whose attendance and wellbeing is less than the expected level.

Parents/Carers will be contacted by School either by letter, phone, home visit or invitation to an attendance meeting involving all relevant agencies, where strategies for improvement are put in place.

In the event of persistent unauthorised absence from school when strategies set up for improvement have failed, the Local Authority will send formal letters warning of prosecution and prepare and present prosecution files to court for the non-attendance. (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)

Daily attendance for all school age children on the roll is a legal requirement therefore Stanton Bridge Primary School fully endorses the government and Local Authority requirements for attendance and registration.

## Penalty Notices

The issue of Fixed Penalty notices following a period of unauthorised absence (e.g. Holiday during term time/extended holiday) or persistent lateness will be sought by the school. This will follow the blanket warning notice issued as part of this policy (appendix 1). This action will follow the excepted legal procedures.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance. Please note that penalty notices can be issued after 10 unauthorised absences, this is **10 registration periods**, i.e. **5 days and /or where** children arrive late **after registers** have closed.

## Registration

The legal status of school registers is regularly stressed to all school staff and meticulous effort is made to ensure they are accurately kept. New staff are provided with training in both the detail of accurate register marking and methods and strategies for encouraging pupils to be punctual and regular in their attendance. School staff are reminded that the authorisation of absence is at the school's discretion and not the parents'. (Guidance is available from the schools attendance officer regarding authorisation and the relevant coding for absences.)

## Reports

- Pupils with less than 96% will be identified and letters sent to parents/carers informing them termly and half termly.
- Individual attendance data is recorded on pupils' annual reports.
- The Head Teacher will report on attendance as part of his/her termly report to governors.
- School attendance data will be recorded by the DFE on the on-line School Profile.

## Holidays in Term-Time

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their opportunities. Stanton Bridge Primary School supports the Local Authority Policy on Holiday in Term Time and recognises that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Government guidance states that only under exceptional circumstances may the Head teacher consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school.

- Parents/Carers are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head Teacher, the Head Teacher may choose to grant leave of absence for up to 10 days in any calendar year. In all circumstances the return date must be agreed by the Head Teacher, as any child who is absent longer can be removed from the school roll (providing that the school and LA have completed the relevant checks and the child has been formally notified to the LA as missing from education).

- Stanton Bridge Primary School expects that all holiday requests should be made prior to booking a holiday.
- Parents/Carers will be required to discuss absence requests with the Head Teacher or the school attendance officer and discuss any concerns over: the pupil's stage of education; the timing or duration of the holiday; the pupil's ability to catch up on work missed or the pupil's attendance is below 95%.
- The Head Teacher will not normally consent to holidays taken by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils (SATS testing). If a child's absence rate is below 95%, or if the pupil already has unauthorised absences.
- An absence for holiday that has not been agreed by the Head Teacher or has continued past the agreed return date will be recorded as unauthorised and may therefore be referred to the Coventry's Children and Families First Service or result in the Head Teacher making an application to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

## Removal from Roll

In the event of school transfer or a pupil moving to another area, a pupil will normally remain on roll until notification is received from a receiving school. Should no notification be received, mindful of the importance of safeguarding children, the school will follow the Local Authority 'Missing Person Protocol and Procedures' and make every effort to locate the pupil in conjunction with the Local Authority. If unsuccessful, a missing person form will be completed and sent to the Local Authority and the pupil may be removed from roll after four weeks of absence.

The school will make it known to all parents that if a pupil fails to return to school within 5 days of the agreed return date, following a holiday, they will lose their space and cannot re-apply for a place at Stanton Bridge again.

## Late Arrival

Parents are informed and regularly reminded of the school dates and times in a number of different ways during the year in the school information provided.

- School points out to parents that poor punctuality gives the pupil who is late a difficult and negative start to their day and disrupts the teaching and learning of the whole class.
- The importance of the registration time in school as a time for greetings, sharing news and preparing the class for the business of learning, is regularly stressed to parents.
- All pupils who arrive late are required to notify reception on arrival and when possible an accurate log of their time of arrival is made.
- All lateness will be monitored. The school attendance officer will keep records, notify parents and where necessary involve the Local Authority.
- Those children who arrive late, after the close of registers will be officially marked as unauthorised absence.

## Parents/Carers

Stanton Bridge Primary School believes that the involvement of parents/carers is a key factor in addressing attendance issues and will ensure that all parents/carers are made aware of their responsibilities.

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence only the school can do this on the basis of the evidence provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should circumstances arise leading to the school to decide that the reason given was not truthful. If this occurs the matter will be discussed with the parent.
- The importance of regular attendance and punctuality is explained to parents/carers when they first enrol their child in the school. Parents should ensure that their children are in school for the start of registration. Registers are taken twice daily at 8:50 and 1:05. Children after these times **must report to the front office**
- At different times throughout the school year, attendance issues are also reiterated in School Newsletters.
- Parents/carers are regularly informed that, if their child is unavoidably absent, they should telephone the office on the first day of absence, send a note with their child, on the day they return to school, explaining the absence and/or provide relevant medical evidence.
- If a pupil is absent for an extended period, parents should keep the school informed and supply expected return dates.
- If the school refuse to authorise an absence, parents/carers will be informed. Contact from the parent is essential for the authorisation of absence but the final decision on whether or not to authorise an absence is for the school to make. Should no contact be forthcoming, the school will contact the parents by telephone or by letter.
- All parent/carers will be contacted on the first day of their child's absence. All reasons given will be recorded. If there is no response then a message may be left and the reason for absence will be sought later either by telephone, appointment or letter.
- If there are any concerns over a child's absence then Coventry's Children and Families First Service will be requested to make a visit.
- It is an expectation of School that all parents/carers will understand that, in addition to securing regular attendance they also have a responsibility to ensure that their children arrive on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.' (Government guidelines)

## Rewards and Strategies

- The achievement of pupils with an attendance of 100% will be celebrated on a termly and yearly basis.
- Pupils who make significant improvements in their attendance/punctuality will be recognised and celebrated.
- Reward systems will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are kept fresh, motivational and inclusive.
- The whole school strategy of “The Great Attendance Race” is promoted and continued.

The school will look for every opportunity to raise the profile of the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents. The school aims to help pupils develop their own self-motivation for daily, punctual attendance.

## Appendix

### Fixed Penalties for Term Time Holidays

As parents you know that children need to attend school for all sessions, so that they can make the best possible progress. Even short absences can seriously harm their learning, so it is essential that a young person’s time at school is maximised. There are only 195 days in the school year, which means there are 170 non-school days left for holidays and other activities. We therefore discourage any time being lost other than through genuine, unavoidable illness.

Should you make a request for time off during term time and it is turned down and you then still remove your child/ren for a total of 5 days or more, you will be given a fixed penalty notice for each child.

A fixed penalty notice is for £60 and would be issued to each parent for each child. This should be paid within 21 days.

If the fines remain unpaid after this time the fine will be doubled to £120 per parent per child, and you will be given a further 28 days to pay.

If after these 28 days the fine has not been paid then Coventry City Council may start civil recovery proceedings on behalf of the school or alternatively prosecute. A parent/carer commits an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, where a child fails to attend school regularly and the parent can be fined £1000.

We therefore ask parents to think very carefully about any decision to take your child/ren out of school during term time and the long term effect it could have on their future attainment.

Reviewed: Autumn 2021

Next review date: Autumn 2023