



Staplehurst School

Attendance Policy

Date

Date ratified by Governing Body

23 September
2015

Policy to be next reviewed

November 2017



Document History

Version	Release Date	Description of Changes	Author
1.0	August 2010	Draft document reviewed.	Judi Beggs Inclusion Manager
1.1	September 2010	Minor amendments made. Document approved by Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team	Judi Beggs Inclusion Manager
1.2	October 2010	Document reviewed by Full Governing Body, three issues required further clarification	Jo Campbell/Clerk
1.3	November 2010	Full Governing Body ratified Policy	
1.4	November 2012	Policy reviewed by L&D Committee in conjunction with attendance data. References to EWO removed.	Clerk
		Additional paragraph regarding role of Inclusion Manager and Family Liaison Officer inserted. Policy ratified by FGB.	Acting Headteacher
	September 2013	Document updated to reflect new Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator	Clerk
1.4	November 2014	Policy reviewed – Monitoring and Review section added and the review period extended to three years subject to the attendance data being reviewed annually by the L&D Committee in the autumn term and action may be taken if the attendance levels fall below national average. Register closure time changed to 9.00am	Jo Campbell/Clerk
1.5	September 2015	Policy updated to include DfE amended Persistent Absence definition, Children Missing in Education (CME) procedures and Appendices	Jo Campbell/Clerk
	November 2015	New attendance information leaflet for parents added to Appendices	Jo Campbell/Clerk



Contents

Introduction	4
Parental Responsibility	4
The Role of the Teacher	4
Role of the Inclusion Manager and Family Liaison Officer	4
Authorised/Non-Authorised Absence	4
Lateness	4
Leave of Absence	5
Persistent Absence (PA)	5
Child Missing in Education (CME)	5
Appeal Committee	6
Penalty Notices	6
Attendance Process	6
Monitoring & Reviewing	6
Appendix 1 – Information Booklet 2015/16 - Attendance	7
Appendix 2 – Attendance Information Leaflet for Parents	8
Appendix 3 - Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance	10



Introduction

- Staplehurst School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.
- One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Staplehurst School actively promotes 100% attendance for all of our pupils and we use a variety of rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.

Parental Responsibility

The responsibility for ensuring that children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents/carers. To this end, it is desirable that parents/carers should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to contact the School **whenever the child is absent**.

The School issues guidance to parents on attendance in the Information Booklet (see Appendix 1) and the Every Day Counts information leaflet (Appendix 2).

The Role of the Teacher

Class Teachers or their Teaching Assistants will complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. They will identify unauthorised absences and bring them to the attention of the School Office as soon as possible.

Role of the Inclusion Manager and Family Liaison Officer

Frequent absence is always a cause for concern. The Inclusion Manager, Tonianne Wrightson, can clarify whether on-going absence is justified.

Where parents/carers are experiencing difficulties and are not always able to support regular attendance of their child, the Inclusion Manager and Family Liaison Officer are available to assist pupils and parents with sensitive domestic situations and, in some cases, refer them to outside agencies for additional support.

Authorised/Non-Authorised Absence

Absence is either **authorised**, such as in the case of illness (where medical evidence is provided) or of religious observance, or **unauthorised**, when there is no reason given for such absence or when it is considered that the explanation is unjustified or unreasonable.

It is the School who authorises absence, not the parent/carer.

Lateness

- Pupils are expected to arrive at school between 8:35am and 8:45am. (No pupils should be on the School premises before 8:35am except when attending authorised activities e.g. breakfast club, Beam.) Pupils should line up outside their classrooms when the second bell rings at 8:45am.
- The Register officially closes at 9.00am. If a child arrives after this time they will be marked as arriving after the register has closed which is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Pupils arriving after the second bell should report to the School reception, together with his/her parent/carer. The parent/carer must sign their child in as late, together with a reason for the lateness.
- Monitoring of this book will take place regularly and warning letters will be sent by the School or Family Liaison Officer, where appropriate.
- If lateness is a persistent problem a meeting will be arranged at the School with the parent/carer, Headteacher and Family Liaison Officer
- Persistent lateness may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice by the Local Authority.



Leave of Absence

Leave of absence in term time will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**. The Headteacher will consider each request for absence individually but will only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Families of Armed Forces personnel
- Where an employer stipulates that holiday has to be taken during a set period (letter from employer is required as evidence)
- Family trauma
- Travelling community where attending functions in line with culture
- Attending functions in line with culture and or religion

It is important to note that a child who is authorised to take 10 days leave during an academic year can only attain 94.7% attendance. The School is not permitted to grant more than 10 days authorised leave of absence in any one academic year. Any request for more than 10 days leave of absence in any one academic year will not be granted.

Although each request will be considered individually, we will never normally authorise leave of absence in term time under the following circumstances:

- At the beginning of School terms
- During assessment periods
- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health
- All requests for leave will be considered individually and such factors as existing attendance record will be considered in making the decision whether to grant leave e.g. absence will not be authorised if it takes a pupil's absence record below 90%.

Leave of absence taken without the Headteacher's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorised (truancy). The deliberate taking of leave in term time without or against School permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions, may result in parents/carers being liable to a penalty notice.

Persistent Absence (PA)

The Department for Education's target for attendance is 95%, although the School actively promotes 100% attendance. A child is deemed to be persistently absent if their attendance falls below 85%.

The School monitors attendance six terms each academic year and will notify parent/carers if their child's attendance falls below 95%.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% parent/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence to evidence absence due to illness and the School may draw up an Individual Healthcare Plan in accordance with the School's **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy**.

If attendance drops below 85% parent/carers will be asked to attend a meeting at School to discuss concerns and to explore ways in which the School, or other outside agencies, may be able to assist with improving attendance.

Persistent absence, in particular persistent unauthorised absence, may result in referral to the Attendance Service and could lead to the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice. The school will follow the LA's **Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance detailed in Appendix 3**

Child Missing in Education (CME)

After 10 days of continuous non-attendance, the School is required to make a referral to the Attendance Service so that a **School Liaison Officer (SLO)** can make further enquiries.

After 20 days of continuous non-attendance and following investigations by the School and SLO, the child may be classified as a Child Missing in Education. If this is the case, then a CME referral form will be completed by the School and forwarded to the Local Authority Inclusion & Attendance Lead.



Appeal Committee

In the event that authorisation is refused by Headteacher, the parent/carer of the pupil may refer the request to the Governing Body Appeal Committee by writing to the Chair of Governors care of the Clerks to the Governors, Staplehurst School.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004.

From January 2005, Kent County Council will consider issuing Penalty Notices in the following circumstances:

- overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- parentally-condoned absences
- leave of absence in term time
- excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

Attendance Process

1. Parents/carers telephone the School with reasons for a pupil's absence before 8:45am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day.
2. The Teacher or a Teaching Assistant will take the register and notify the School Office of any absences.
3. The School Office will cross check any absences with messages from parents/carers.
4. If a child's absence is unaccounted for, the School Office will contact the parent/carer immediately.
5. When the child returns to School the parent/carer should provide a written note of reason for absence (medical certificate or letter from doctor may be required for any illness requiring more than five consecutive working days absence). The School Office will enter the appropriate absence code into the register.
6. Absence is monitored daily by the School Office, weekly by the Inclusion Manager and monthly by the Headteacher.
7. Where absence is a cause for concern the School will ask the parent/carer to attend a meeting.

Monitoring & Reviewing

Attendance data is reviewed annually in the autumn term by the Governing Body's L&D Committee and action may be taken if the attendance levels fall below national average.

All School staff and governors will have access to a copy of this policy and will have the opportunity to consider and discuss significant changes to its contents, prior to the approval of the Governing Body being formally sought. This policy will be formally reviewed every three years or in the light of changes to legal requirements



Appendix 1 – Information Booklet 2015/16 - Attendance

Regular attendance is extremely important.

Regular School attendance will mean your child has a better chance in life. Your child will achieve better when they go to School all day, every day.

- They learn better
- They make friends
- They are happier
- They have a brighter future

Parents/carers must let us know, as soon as possible, on the first day of absence, if your child is sick or otherwise unable to attend School. Irregular attendance interrupts your child's learning.

Please ensure that your child arrives for School on time. Children who arrive late find the experience unsettling and their late arrival disrupts the class for the other children. It is not the child's fault if they arrive at School late, but they are the ones who can sometimes feel uncomfortable about the situation. Any child arriving after the 8.45 bell must be signed in at reception by an adult. Any child arriving after 9.00am will be given an unauthorised absence mark.

The Department for Education's target for attendance, from September 2015, is 95%, although the School actively promotes 100% attendance.

We monitor attendance under 95% six termly each academic year and will notify parents if their child's attendance falls below this level.

If your child is sick for a long period please keep us informed so that we are able to maintain contact with your child and offer help if necessary.

If your child's attendance falls below 90% you may be asked to provide medical evidence to evidence absence due to illness. If attendance drops below 85% you will be asked to attend a meeting at School to discuss any concerns and to explore ways in which the School, or other outside agencies, may be able to assist you and your child with improving attendance.

Persistent absence, in particular persistent unauthorised absence, may result in referral to The Attendance Service and could lead to the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice.

Absence from School

Government regulations regarding absences are strict. The law now states that all absences must be logged and records sent to the Department for Education (DfE). We would be grateful for your co-operation in the following ways:

- Please telephone before 8.35 a.m. to report your child's absence on the first day of absence, then send in a brief note of explanation to the class teacher when your child returns to School. If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea please ensure you keep your child away for at least 24 hours after their last episode.
- Where possible please arrange non-urgent medical/dental appointments outside School hours to keep disruption to learning time at a minimum.
- Should it be necessary to leave School during the day for medical, dental or other reasons, please inform the School office and/or class teacher. The child must be collected from and/or brought back to School via the School reception and must be signed out/in. This is to ensure your child's safety at all times.
- Leave of absence in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider each request for absence individually but will only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence taken without the Headteacher's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorised (truancy). The deliberate taking of leave in term time without or against School permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions, may result in parents/carers being liable to a penalty notice.
- Annual reports include figures for absences and we are statutorily obliged to publicise unauthorised absence. The School has a robust Attendance policy in place which is available for parents to view and persistent unauthorised absences will be referred to our Family Liaison Officer.

Appendix 2 – Attendance Information Leaflet for Parents

Attendance Percentages

The school year is made up of 190 days.

How much education has your child missed?

95% = 10 days

90% = 20 days

85% = 30 days

80% = 40 days

75% = 50 days

70% = 60 days

Staplehurst School

Gybbon Rise
Staplehurst
Kent
TN12 0LZ
Phone: 01580 891765
E-mail: office@staplehurst.kent.sch.uk



Staplehurst School Attendance Information 2015-16

Attendance Targets

From September 2015, The Department for Education's target for attendance is 95%, although the school actively promotes 100% attendance.

Regular school attendance will mean your child has a better chance in life. Your child will achieve better when they go to school all day, every day.

The school monitors all children whose attendance falls below 95% six times per academic year. You will be notified if your child's attendance falls below this in order to ensure you are kept fully informed.

For ongoing, long term medical absences, or when percentage attendance is particularly low, you will be asked to provide medical "evidence", which can be items such as a doctor's appointment card, copy of a prescription or copies of hospital appointment letters. Please do not be concerned if this is requested from you, the school is expected to have this evidence to enable us to continue to authorise absence.

Under the new guidance, any child whose attendance falls below 85% will be considered a persistent absentee, and you may be asked to attend an Attendance Meeting.

If you are struggling, for any reason, to get your child into school, our Family Liaison Officer (FLO), Corinne Laming, will be happy to help with advice and assistance. The school may be able to put interventions in place to help, or refer you to an outside agency should it be appropriate.

Absence From School

Government regulations regarding absences are strict. The law now states all absences must be logged and records sent to the Department for Education (DfE).

We would be grateful for your cooperation in the following ways:

- Please telephone before 8.35am to report your child's absence on the first day of absence. Then send in a brief note of explanation. It is really important to notify the school of the reason why your child is absent, as we need to know your child is safe with you, otherwise safeguarding concerns may be raised.
- Where possible please arrange non-urgent medical/dental appointments outside school hours.
- Leave of absence in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider each request for absence individually, but will only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances.

Lateness

Please ensure your child arrives for school on time. Children who arrive late find the experience unsettling and their late arrival disrupts the class for the other children.

Any child arriving after the 8.45am bell must be signed in at Reception by an adult. Any child arriving after 9am, when the registers close, will be given an unauthorised mark if there is not a valid reason for the lateness.

Appendix 3 - Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

