



**Staplehurst School**

# **Attendance Policy**

**Date**

Approved by the Full Governing Body at a meeting on  
Policy to be next reviewed  
Policy updated and approved by FGB

15 March 2022  
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## Attendance Vision

- 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 weekly, termly and annual awards, to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- The Governors, Headteacher and Staff recognise that parents / carers have a vital role and a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance and we will identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents / carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.
- Start of Day
- All children are expected to arrive on time for school between 8.35 and 8.50 when the pupil entrance gate closes. All pupils that are late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded. See section: Lateness
- Our expected level of Attendance for all children is 99%.

## Parental / Carer Responsibility

- Parents / Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance impacts their educational attainment and social and emotional needs. It can put pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour. Missing out on lessons or arriving late leaves children vulnerable to failing, impacting on their academic progress and ability to meet age-related expectations. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.
- **It is the parents/Carers responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents/Carers should update the school on a daily basis or inform the school when their child is returning.**

## The Role of the School Staff

Staplehurst School recognise attendance is a whole school responsibility with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Class teacher notifies the Assistant Head and Family Liaison Officer of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the school office to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by text.
- Where there has been no communication, phone calls are made or emails are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.

- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes).
- Parents are informed termly of the child's attendance figure.

## Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- Above 95% attendance – the school office to investigate and notify the Inclusion Manager / Family Liaison Officer of concerns. The school office to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters (see appendices for templates)
- Below 90% or where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to their in-house Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

## Children Absent from Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Where a child is absent from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate them.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

## Lateness

At Staplehurst School the register is taken at 8.50 am and 1.30 pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will officially close at 9.20 am and 1.45 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness will be monitored by the School Office Staff and reported to the Family Liaison Officer, where 5 or more occasions of lateness have occurred in a half term, a letter will be sent to parents inviting them to a formal meeting.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

## Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:**

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued **(one per parent per child)**
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

## Authorising Absence

Should you need to take your child out of school for any reason, you must complete a Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time Form which is available from the school office. Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received or the reason is considered to be unjustified or it comes to light that a pupil went on holiday when they were reported to be unwell then this absence will be unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice may be given if appropriate.

When your child has reached 3 separate occasions or 5 consecutive days of illness, we may ask for medical evidence before we approve any more absence due to sickness.

Parents do not have the automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday in term time. In accordance with Education Regulations, The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during term time.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances".

The following reasons are examples of absence that will **not** be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Another member of the family is ill
- or had a late Oversleeping night
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- It has snowed and you live within walking distance of the school
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- A family member has a medical or other appointment
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) will result in a referral to our in-house Education Welfare Officer who may contact parents and if necessary invite them to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance.

## Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.

- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child).

### **Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent 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's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances if evidence is provided (wedding invitation, Order of Service, appointment card etc) and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to **each parent for each child** taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## **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 Late Letter (Code L)

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that **child's name** has been late to school this academic year. (**Although their overall attendance is good,**) **child's name** was late on ? occasions, missing out on over ? hours of education. A Registration Certificate is attached showing when your child was late for school.

At Staplehurst School the morning register is taken at 8:50am and is closed at 9:20am for the morning session. Any child arriving between 8:51am and 9:20am will be given a Code L (late before the registers close) and arrival after 9:20am will be a Code U (late after registers close), which is an unauthorised absence mark.

Arriving late can seriously disrupt their learning and will impact their potential. It can also be embarrassing for your child and make them feel uncomfortable when they arrive in class. Please see the table below which shows how punctuality affects attendance:

Minutes late each day	School days lost over academic year
5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6.5 days
15 minutes	10 days
20 minutes	13 days
30 minutes	19 days

Given the above, please ensure that punctuality improves immediately. If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Family Liaison Officer

## APPENDIX 2 Late Letter (Code U)

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates\_of\_lates\_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total\_lates\_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at ?? am and is closed at ?? am for the morning session and taken again at ?? pm and closed at ?? pm for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## APPENDIX 3 Stage 1

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

We do understand that certain illnesses are unavoidable and sometimes your child is too unwell to attend school. However, regular attendance at school is a major focus for the Department for Education (DFE) and Staplehurst School.

Child's name attendance this academic year is currently ?%. This is considerably below what the DFE and the school consider to be an acceptable level of attendance.

We would like to make you aware that the school are no longer able to authorise any further illness related absences for child's name unless they are supported with some form of medical evidence. Examples of medical evidence could include: a letter from your doctor, a copy of your child's prescription or an appointment card.

Please find enclosed a copy of your child's Registration Certificate, which shows details of the absences child's name has had. We will continue to monitor child's name attendance and should you wish to discuss this further please contact me.

Many thanks for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely

Family Liaison Officer

## **APPENDIX 4 Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)**

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Request for leave during Term-Time**

**For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday.

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## **APPENDIX 5 Response to Leave Request submitted retrospectively (Not Authorising)**

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Request for leave during Term-Time**

**For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday.

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## APPENDIX 6 School letter Holiday reported as Illness

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

We/I believe (always state why you believe this) that your child has been taken on holiday during term time, between DATE and DATE which was not requested and has not been authorised. This absence will be recorded as code G, which is an unauthorised mark, unless you are able to provide us with evidence that your child was absent for another reason within the next 10 days.

Where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school sessions a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted for the offence of failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of e Penalty Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay the penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence as set out in the notice, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Please feel free to contact the school should you wish to discuss this matter further

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## APPENDIX 7 Traveller Attendance Letter

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### Traveller Absence

«forename» «surname»

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «forename» has been absent from school. This academic year «forename» has missed «total\_authorised\_absences» authorised half day sessions and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» unauthorised half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «percentage\_attendance»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if «forename»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances or if you will be travelling for occupational purposes and agree this with the school in advance.

If you would like to speak to me about «forename»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## APPENDIX 8 Traveller Absence due to travelling

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### Traveller Absence

«forename» «surname»

Thank you for contacting me to say that «forename» will be absent from school from ??**Date** as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «forename»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when «forename» is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will refer «forename» to the Local Authority as a Child Absent from Education.

After 20 days absence, there may be grounds to take «forename»'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher



## APPENDIX 9 DofE Register Codes

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
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised 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
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

### KEY

Present
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances

## APPENDIX 10 Attendance Procedures Flow Chart



### Attendance Procedures Flow Chart

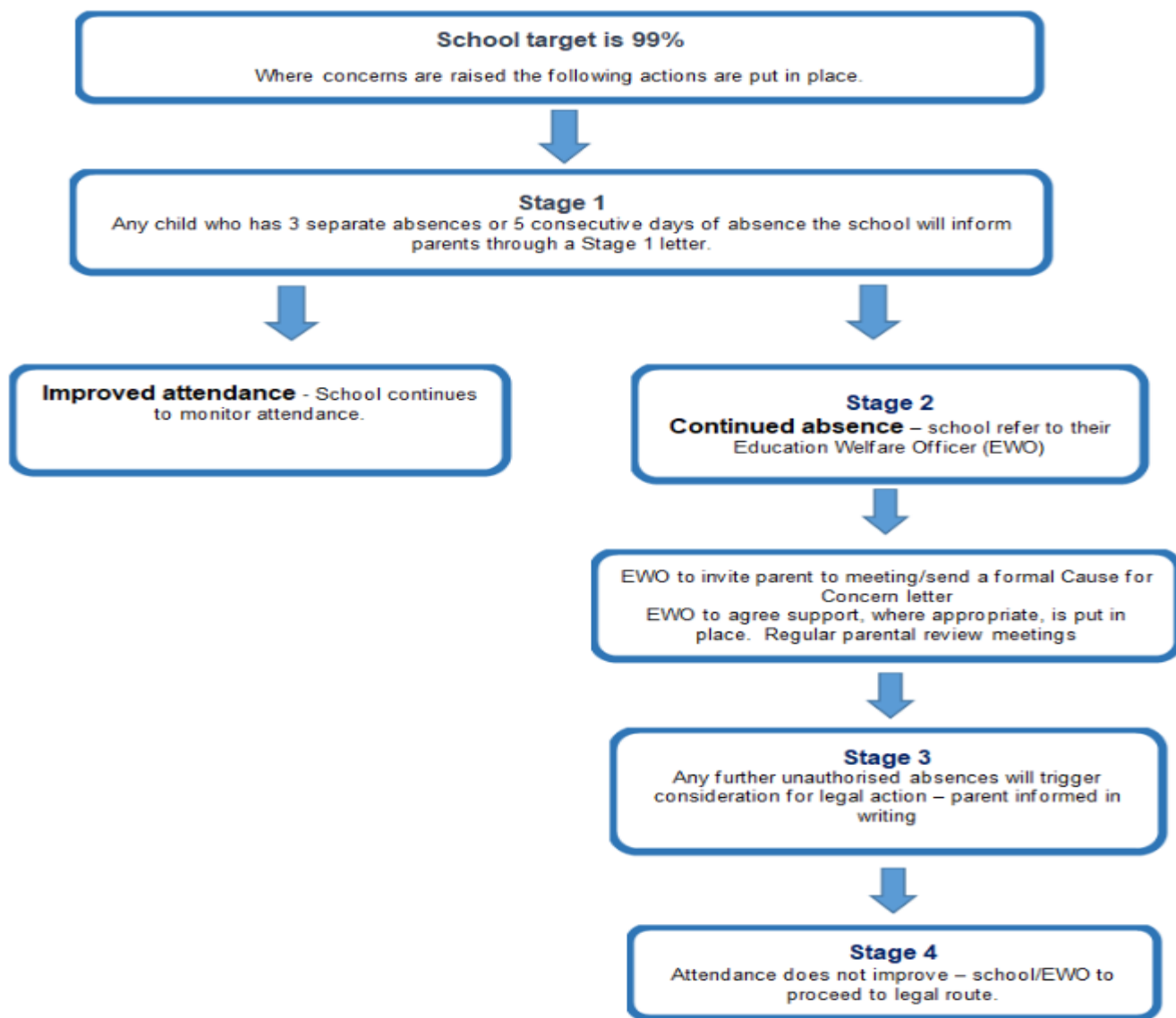


Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their children's good attendance, the Head Teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

The procedures below are followed to ensure that this happens.

All pupils' attendance is monitored via Sims and the school colour tracking system. All teaching staff are given copies of colour tracking on a weekly basis.

First day contact text messages are sent (by 10.00am) to parents for any unreported absences.  
Daily telephone calls to parents of PA pupils.



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