

Stoke Row CE School



Attendance Policy

Document Approval Record

Committee	Teaching and Learning
Chair of Committee	Catherine Hale
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Headteacher	Angela Wheatcroft
Chair of Governors	Elizabeth Clough
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'Shine like stars and become light in our world'

At Stoke Row School we aim for our children to have the brightest futures, each one nurtured individually to be a guiding light with a unique sparkle.

We teach on another to live with kindness and respect.

We help our children to understand that with courage and perseverance they can excel.

These policies are all created in line with the Christian foundation of this school which is expressed through our five core values and our view that every child is unique and valued.

To conform with the requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) all data is handled according to the terms of our Privacy Notice. A copy of this is available on our school website.

1. Aims

This policy lays out guidance to staff, parents and carers to ensure that children attend school regularly and so gain the greatest benefit from their education.

Statutory duties

This policy has been written to adhere to the following legislation and mandatory requirements on attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupils Attendance Records) Regulations 1991
- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 2006)
 - Working together to improve school attendance – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2. The Importance of Regular Attendance:

Any absence affects a child's schooling; regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Absence can also disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others.

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

3. Categories of Absence

The school classifies every half-day absence as authorised or unauthorised. We will therefore require an explanation for any absence.

Authorised absences include illness and medical/dental appointments. The school may require evidence of the appointment.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. This may result in the Local Authority instigating sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy before or during the school day, unexplained absences, late arrival, birthdays, trips and holidays, and excessive illnesses without medical evidence.

Children may be reluctant to attend school. In such cases it is important that the school is made aware of the problem in order that it can be discussed with the parents and child. Parents should not cover up the absence of reluctant attendees as this may exacerbate the problem.

Please support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school
- Encouraging social development

4. Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. This level of absenteeism will cause significant damage to a child's academic and social progress and can have lifelong consequences. Any child who is identified as being severely absent will have an individual attendance plan which will include multi-agency support. Parents will be expected to engage with professionals with the aim of improving the child's attendance to 96% or above.

5. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year. This level of absenteeism may cause damage to a child's educational prospects and we appreciate parents' support and co-operation in tackling this.

Absence is thoroughly monitored, and parents will be contacted if there are concerns about a child's attendance level.

All cases of persistent absenteeism are automatically reported to the County Attendance team. Parental consent will be sought to complete a Strengths and Needs assessment.

6. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school office by 9.00am on the first day of absence and then on subsequent days.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if you have not informed us of the reason for the absence. If we are unable to make contact by phone we will send you an email
- If, following a reasonable explanation, attendance is below 90% you will be invited to have a discussion with our Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
- Following this discussion, if your child's attendance fails to improve, the matter will be referred to the County Attendance Team.

7. The County Attendance Team

Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, the County Attendance Team may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer or take action via a Non-Attendance referral. This legislation is covered in sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996:

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs assessment. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance. If parents have previously been issued with Penalty Notices, further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Parents may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. The Team is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Its telephone number is 01865 323513 and email address is attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

8. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children who miss the start of the day may miss vital work and information from their class teacher.

The school day starts at 8.45 am

Registers are marked by 8.55 am and your child will be marked as late if they are not in by that time.

At 9.15 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with regulations, children arriving after this will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, however this will not count as a present mark and it will constitute an unauthorised absence. This could mean the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

9. Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling in the same way as any other absence. Parents are not expected to take children away in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised leave of absence. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carers concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £80 and £160 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

10. School targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96%, and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level.

Our target is to achieve higher than 96% attendance; good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be among the best in Oxfordshire.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements can be made.

11. Responsibilities

The LEA, school and parents/carers all hold legal responsibility with respect to attendance. The following sets out specific roles.

Class teacher

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children or their parents/carers.
 - Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns.
 - Providing background information to support referrals.
 - Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
 - Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at parent-consultation sessions where necessary.

Headteacher

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Noting trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the AEO, and providing reports and background information to inform discussions.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

School Administrator

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

Parents/Carers

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Named Governor

- To have overall responsibility for monitoring the above as communicated in Headteachers report at Full Governing Board three times a year. Our Governor responsible for attendance is Elizabeth Clough.

Responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Headteacher and the School Administrator.

12. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.