

**AMBITIOUS - CARING - EXCELLENCE**

# **Stapleford Community Primary School**

## **\*Attendance Policy**



<b>STAPLEFORD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>			
<b>*Attendance POLICY</b>			
<b>Review frequency</b>	2 years	<b>Date of next review</b>	Spring 2023
<b>Committee</b>	Performance and Standards	<b>Required by Law</b>	Yes
<b>Governor approval (date)</b>	Spring 2021	<b>Website (public area)</b>	Yes
<b>Staff / governor responsible</b>	HT	<b>Date produced</b>	2016

Required by law\*

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amendments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>

## **STAPLEFORD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2021-23**

### **AIMS:**

Stapleford Community Primary School aims to work together with Parents/Carers to ensure that all children registered at the school attend punctually and on a daily basis.

At Stapleford Community Primary School we are **ambitious** for our pupils and want the best for every child. We work in partnership with parents and the local community to encourage and support each other in our pursuit of excellence. We believe that regular attendance at school is essential for all pupils to fulfill their potential. This policy sets out procedures for addressing unauthorized absence and rewarding great attendance.

Optimum levels of attendance can only be achieved when responsibility is accepted and shared by all concerned: pupils, parents, school staff, governors and the local community.

### **The Law**

The Law states that all children of compulsory school age (5 – 16) should attend school regularly and on a full time basis to obtain the maximum benefit from their education.

### **What is good attendance like?**

The DfE and Ofsted collect and compare attendance data for all schools in England. In 2017-18 % of sessions missed due to overall absence for Stapleford School was 3.7% compared to the national figure 4.2%. The target is to improve attendance to be better than the national figure. This can only be achieved with schools and parents working together.

The DfE considers a pupil to be persistently absent if he/she is away for more than 10% of school sessions in an academic year. In 2017-18 8.9% pupils deemed to be persistent absentees, above the National figure of 8.2%.

### **What is Good Attendance?**

- 100% attendance for all children is the aim. But realistically we know that children will be ill from time to time. However we are ambitious for the children in our school and aim for attendance to be 97% or better.
- Attendance figures are recorded on the annual reports to parents.

### **Strategies for Maintaining and Improving Attendance**

- Verbal praise, encouragement and acknowledgement.
- Pupil awareness as to the importance of good attendance.
- HT /DHT and DSL to monitor attendance data records across the whole school.

## **Completing the register**

Registers are legal documents and are retained by the school even after a pupil has left school. The Governing Body is legally responsible for the attendance register and must register with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 2018. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that information is accurately entered onto the SIMS register. Data from registers may be used in evidence where parents are being prosecuted for attendance offences.

Registers at Stapleford Community Primary School are completed electronically by the class teachers using the SIMS system. In the event of a power failure a paper copy is completed. See appendix 1 for a copy of the SIMS codes.

Registers will be called twice daily at 9am for juniors / 9.05am for infants, and at 1.15pm. Registers close at 9.10am (juniors) /9.15am (infants) and 1.20pm. Any child arriving after that time will be marked as 'late'.

Registers are sent to the school office where late arrivals may be added. If a child is absent the office staff will enter the appropriate code in the register. If no explanation has been received by 9.15am from the Parent/carer, the school will endeavour to make contact with the parent after which an appropriate judgement regarding authorisation will be made. Any absences or persistent late arrivals after 9.25am are marked as unauthorised absences.

## **Authorised Absence**

- The Department for Education (DfE) points out that it is the school that authorises an absence and that a note containing an unacceptable explanation for an absence does not allow it to be treated as authorised.
- Parents / carers may not authorise absence, only schools can do this. If the school believes a child has too many authorised absences we will inform Parents/Carers that future absences may not be authorised without additional reassurances or evidence that the absences were unavoidable. See appendices 2 & 3 for circumstances that may lead to parents finding it necessary for their child to be absent.
- ALL OTHER ABSENCES MUST BE TREATED AS UNAUTHORISED – see appendix 3
- On the second day of absence, if no contact has been made or the reason given is unacceptable, the absence will be recorded as unauthorized.
- A letter will be sent to the parent when attendance falls below 93% in a term or below 90% within an 8 week period, where no reasonable excuse is known, such as long term illness.
- Another letter will be sent after 20 sessions of absence or where a pattern of absences has not improved.
- The head teacher/school designated lead for child protection will, with the parent's permission, liaise with the child's GP's if poor attendance seems to be linked to medical problems.
- The School will make a referral to the Cambridgeshire Education Welfare Officer if attendance has not improved.

## **Leave of Absence Requests**

Parents may make a request in writing on the official form, these are available from the school

office, and should be forwarded to the school office ideally with at least a week's notice. Parents will be informed by letter whether the leave will be recorded as an authorised or unauthorised absence. No leave of absence will be authorised if attendance is below 90% and the Headteacher may require a meeting to discuss this.

- **Unauthorised Absence**

In the event of an unexplained absence, a phone call will be made after 9.15 am to establish the reason for the absence. An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and the parent/carer or if the child is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent/carer.

Holidays taken within the school term (except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Head teacher) will be deemed as unauthorised absence. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as they are likely to lead to the issuing of a penalty notice.

### **Fixed Penalty Notice**

Parents who take unauthorised term time holidays, or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence forming over any four week period, could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Fine.

Where there is a history of good attendance and no previous issues with term time holidays being taken in the previous three years, a monitoring period and a formal warning will be applied. Where there are existing or previous attendance issues and other unauthorised leave taken in previous terms/years, a Penalty Fine will apply.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis but the following will NOT meet the criteria:

- Cheaper holidays in England or abroad
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than 2 days or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit

### **The Role of the School**

When a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will endeavor to contact the parent as soon as possible. Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates/evidence will be kept on file and referred to as and when appropriate e.g. if legal action is required.

The head teacher / designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will closely monitor the attendance of all pupils with less than 93% attendance. The Headteacher and DDSL (deputy designated safeguard lead) will work closely together to identify children at risk of becoming Persistent Absentees (PAs). They will keep parents informed termly if absence figures fall below 93% and offer support to parents as appropriate.

### **The Role of Parents / Carers**

It is the responsibility of parents / carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If parental support is not forthcoming, strategies used by the school to encourage good attendance may fail.

Parents / carers must inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence and again on the third day if the child hasn't returned to school. They may be asked to provide any supporting evidence (e.g. appointment card) which may be required to validate the reason given for the absence.

Parents are expected to attend meetings requested by school staff in relation to their child's attendance and to take an active role in improving their child's attendance. Where children have individual targets for attendance, parents are expected to work closely with school staff.

### **Parents / carers should:**

- Contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence, giving a reason and anticipated length of absence.
- Make every effort to ensure medical/dental appointments are made for out of school hours and that evidence of appointments are supplied where this is impossible. If an emergency appointment is made, evidence must be brought into the school office following the appointment. The school reserves the right to record as unauthorised any time taken for medical/dental appointments.
- Seek approval in advance for leave of absence, by completing the relevant form.

### **Covid 2020-2021**

Since the outbreak of Covid19, it may be necessary for pupils to be absent from school due to illness or isolation. In March 2021 the DfE issued guidance and that is followed at all times. Pupils that have to be absent due to self isolating, shielding or quarantining are marked with an 'X' code. Online/remote learning is provided for these pupils. If they test positive, the code used is I (illness).

## Appendix 1 ~SIMS Code

- / ~ Present at registration**
- B~ Educated off-site (not dual registration)**
- C~ Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate Code/description)**
- D ~ Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)**
- E ~ Excluded but no alternative provision made**
- F ~ Agreed extended family holiday**
- G~ Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)**
- H ~Agreed family holiday (Will be removed at some stage)**
- I~Illness**
- J ~ Interview**
- L ~ Late but arrived before the register closed**
- M ~ Medical or dental appointment**
- N ~ No reason for the absence provided yet**
- O ~ Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)**
- P ~ Approved sporting activity**
- R ~ Day set aside exclusively for religious observance**
- S ~ Study leave**
- T ~ Traveller absence**
- U ~ Late and arrived after the register closed**
- V ~ Educational visit or trip**
- W ~ Work experience (not work based training)**
- X ~ Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils**
- Y ~ Partial and forced closure**
- Z ~ Pupil not on roll yet**
- # ~ School closed to all pupils**

## **Appendix 2~ Authorised Absence**

### **An absence may be counted as authorised if a child is absent:**

- When prevented from attending by sickness.
- On a day set aside for religious observance.

Furthermore Stapleford Community Primary School may “reasonably exercise discretion to grant leave” for:

- Absence following the death of a member of the child’s immediate family.

## **Appendix 3 ~ Unauthorised Absence**

### **Unacceptable reasons for absence that may result in a fine**

- The child’s father/mother or carer being ill.
- A pupil being used to support members of the family.
- Family work patterns.
- A parent’s desire for company.
- Indulging a child who wants to stay at home.
- A child’s birthday.
- A parent’s inability to control the child.
- Treating headlice.