



STAPLEFORD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED:	SPRING 2023
THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED:	SPRING 2024
POLICY AMENDED AND UPDATED	SPRING 2023
MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING REVIEW:	LAURA RAWLINGS
APPROVED BY:	LOCAL GOVERNING BODY (LGB)

“Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility.”

(Working Together to Improve School Attendance - DFE Guidance, Sept 2022)

Aims

Stapleford Community Primary School aims to work together with Parent/Carers and the Local Authority Attendance Officers (LAAOs) to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

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 fulfil their potential. This policy sets out procedures for addressing unauthorised absence and encouraging 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.

Principles

We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the whole school. At the same time, ensuring that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age. The school strives for all pupils to have 100% attendance and sees 95% as the minimum expectation for all pupils. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and November 2016 make it clear that Head Teachers may not authorise holidays (or other leave of absence) in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Working Together to improve attendance

At Stapleford Community Primary School we take a number of measures to promote good attendance and punctuality:

- We provide a supportive and caring school ethos where warm and positive relationships are at the heart of all that we do
- We ensure that the children follow an exciting, engaging curriculum that is meaningful and relevant to the needs of our children.
- Attendance data is collected for all children and shared with parents and carers at different times throughout the school year, including parent consultations and school reports.
- Communication is sent to parents about class and school attendance figures, the importance of good attendance and its link with good achievement.
- Informal, supportive conversations are had with parents regarding falling pupil attendance and how it can be improved and whether additional support is needed.

Parent/Carers Responsibilities

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence under Section 444/441(a) of the Education Act 1996. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning. See Appendix 1.

Parent/Carers must:

- Ensure all children registered at Stapleford Community Primary School attend regularly and punctually everyday unless prevented from doing so by illness or medical appointment.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time, parents may on occasions be asked to provide supporting evidence from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Report any changes to their contact details to the Office to ensure the school has the most up to date contact information. As a school, we request that we hold details for 3 emergency contacts for a child.

School Responsibilities

- The school is responsible for working with pupils and parents/carers to improve attitudes around attendance.
- All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Head Teacher having overall responsibility in the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil.

Stapleford Community Primary School expects all children to attend school regularly and punctually. The school encourages good attendance and will tenaciously investigate every unexplained or unjustified absence. This involves following up all pupil attendance where parents/carers have failed to inform the school of the reason why the pupil is absent. This may take the form of a telephone call home or email contact and in some cases a home visit if a parent or carer has not made contact about the absence.

Procedures

Registration

Reception to Year 6:

- The classroom door opens at 0850 to Reception children and 0855 to Year1 to Year 6.
- All external classroom doors and gates are locked at 0905.
- Once the external classroom doors and gates have been locked, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- In the morning, registers open at 0850/0855 and close at 0905.
- In the afternoon, registers open at 1300 and close at 1310.
- Stapleford Community Primary School uses the Bromcom System to record registration online. Teachers mark the child as present or absent with the appropriate attendance code. (see appendix 2)
- Any child leaving the school for a medical appointment, illness or other reason will be signed out at the school office so we have an accurate record of pupils on site for fire evacuation purposes. This will also be marked on the fire evacuation register.

Lateness

Pupils who arrive after the classroom register is closed (0905) and up to 0925 will be marked as late. Any pupil who arrives after 0925 will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Children who are persistently late to school will miss a significant amount of their education which will affect their learning and progress.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parents/Carers will initially receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns. This will advise Parent/Carers to speak to a member of staff to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, Parents/Carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for pupils who are of statutory school age.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/Carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 0915.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of the attendance team will attempt to make contact with the Parent/Carers by 0925.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Failure to make contact with the Parent/Carers to establish a reason for an absence will result in an Unexplained Absence Form being sent home for the Parent/Carers to complete and return to school at the earliest opportunity. Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a Parent/Carers to an enquiry regarding their child's absence from school.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting evidence may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, a letter that is headed from the medical professional or an appointment card. A period of absences will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment. Children who fail to return to school within a reasonable time following their medical appointment could result in an am/pm session being unauthorised.

Illness

Children who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea or sickness can return after they have been 48 hours clear (*NHS Guidance*).

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezing and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and are well enough to return to school.

We will continue to respond to Government advice, for example, Covid-19 and share updates with parents/carers in relation to the latest guidance.

Following up unexplained absences

If the reason for absence is unknown at the close of registration, 0925 staff will:

- Phone the contact numbers provided by the Parent/Carers to enquire about a pupil's absence. Staff will ring the first priority contact number to establish a reason for the absence. If unable to make contact, they will call the next contact until we have been provided with a reason for absence.
- Complete the registers in accordance with the guidelines relating to correct usage of codes
- Leave a message on voicemail requesting parents to contact school regarding their child's absence.
- Log the outcome of the phone call on Bromcom.
- Inform the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) should there be a particular concern regarding an individual pupil's attendance or lateness.

Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

If applicable, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a penalty notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Monitoring

The School Attendance Team

The School Attendance Team comprises the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Administrator. The team meets regularly to track attendance, decide on actions and agree meetings with parents or carers where there are concerns around attendance.

Lateness and attendance are monitored daily by the team who will:

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers once attendance has fallen below the threshold set and communicating to parents (strong attendance is viewed as 97% plus)
- Offer support or signpost to other areas of support within the community

As patterns of attendance are habitual, early identification and support is essential for individual pupils in need of help. Our early intervention process is outlined below:

- Step One. A letter advising Parent/Carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child(ren)'s attendance and/or lateness.
- Step Two, informal contact. This can be via telephone, or a brief catch up at the start/end of the school day by any member of staff, to ascertain barriers to accessing education and offering support and signposting.
- Step Three. A formal Parent Contract Meeting to be held in school, with Parent/Carers to discuss concerns and, working together, identifying support which can be offered and signposting. Targets will be set to improve the attendance and/or lateness. These targets will be reviewed at the end of an agreed monitoring period.
- Step Four. Should the targets set at step three not be met following a review, despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for children of statutory school age.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance and/or lateness.
- Monitor pupils attendance within specific and identified groups
- Monitor pupil absences for those with additional medical needs
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils 'Child Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to Home Educate their child(ren)
- Follow procedures when deleting a pupil from roll
- Meet with LAAO on the allocated visits to school, who will also monitor the registers and follow up any identified concerns.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Complete a Medical Needs Assessment on pupils with absences of 15 days during the school year

- Monitor and act upon requests for term time leave of absence and ensure Parent/Carers are informed of procedures in relation to authorised/unauthorised leave

The attendance officer will work closely with the designated leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school who is Mrs Jayne Hore.

Only the Head teacher or the designated leader may authorise any absence for a legitimate reason, not all absence supported by Parent/Carers will be classified as authorised.

Definitions of Leave:

Stapleford Community Primary school expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness, subject to pattern of illness or a medical appointment where supporting evidence has been provided to cover the period of absence. However, there is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

Unauthorised leave:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the Parent/Carers, such as shopping, hair appointments, visiting family or birthdays.
- Medical appointments where supporting evidence of appointment details have not been provided when asked for.
- There has been no reason provided by the Parent/Carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Guidance for Parents – Term Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term Time Leave Request form and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable,

with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If the school suspects Term Time Leave has been taken but the parent/carers have not completed a Term Time Leave Request Form, we will write to parent/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstances

These will be considered on an individual basis, such as up to two days absence from school to visit a dying relative, death of a family member, attendance at a funeral or any unavoidable one off event, but the following examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance** and will not be authorised and could be subject to a penalty notice/fine for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term
- Trip of a lifetime
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance

Penalty Notice

The fine for a penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £120 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child (ren) this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

Parents/Carers who take unauthorised leave for their child during term time or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence over any 4-week period could be subject to the issue of a penalty notice or prosecution.

Stapleford Community Primary School is keen to support and work with families to improve poor attendance and to avoid the need to implement the above procedures.

“Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility.”

(Working Together to Improve School Attendance - DFE Guidance, Sept 2022)

Appendix 1

***Children are required by law to attend school
100% of the time - or 190 days per year.***

Attendance during the school year	Equals days absent	Which is approximately	Which means this number of missed lessons
95%	9 days	2 Weeks	45 lessons
90%	19 days	4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 days	6 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	38 days	8 Weeks	190 lessons
75%	48 days	10 Weeks	240 Lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	385 Lessons
65%	67 days	13.5 Weeks	335 Lessons

Appendix 2

Attendance Codes - Bromcom

- / ~ Present at registration
- B ~ Educated off-site (not dual registration)
- C ~ Leave of authorised absence granted by the school (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 3 - Example Attendance Letter

Dear Parent

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

We have noticed that your child <forename> attendance has deteriorated, we have enclosed a copy of «forename»'s attendance record so that you can view a detailed breakdown of your child's absence from school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.

We will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason, please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly or if you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me. However, it does no harm in speaking with the teacher or attendance team, because together we can make a difference.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 4 - Term Time Leave Request Form

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)

I wish to apply to have an 'exceptional circumstances' absence authorised, for:

Child's name Class/Year

Child's name Class/Year

Date from date to(inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):
.....

Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider (please see back of the form for advice/guidance). This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

I understand that Leave of Absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Should this not be granted and I take my child out of school, I am aware that I may be liable for a Penalty Notice.

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)
.....

Office use only			<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised Code ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised Signed _____ Headteacher
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance	

This portion to be returned to parents/carers

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class/Year.....
....

Absence authorised fromto
(Inclusive)

Absence unauthorised current attendance % as of
...../...../20.....

Signed(HeadTeacher) Date.....

NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS: The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives.

AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

Permission must be sought in advance. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactory up to the date covered by this request.

WARNING: If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>School aged pupils in maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

<p>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Genuine illness ● Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible) ● Days of religious observance ● Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces ● External examinations ● When Traveller children go on the road with their parents ● When a family needs to spend time together due to the bereavement of an immediate family member ● Transport not provided by the local authority when it should have been 	<p>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any type of shopping ● Looking after siblings or unwell parents ● Birthdays ● Tiredness after a late night ● Relatives visiting or visiting relatives ● Family holidays ● Bullying ● Friendship issues ● Death of a pet ● School refusal
<p>The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time. We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	