



## Staple Hill Primary School Attendance & Punctuality Policy

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an effective full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure the regular full-time attendance at school of registered children (Education Act, 1996). Staple Hill takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impede the child's ability to develop friendships. The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for promoting good attendance across the school. The policy includes:

- guidelines for electronic registration
- guidelines for responding to absence
- procedures for communicating with parents/carers
- monitoring of attendance

### **Responsibilities**

**The role of the parent/carer**, in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance, is critical. At Staple Hill, we intend to maintain close, effective and positive links with our parents/carers and ensure that they are contacted on the first day of absence, if no explanation has been received.

**The school** has a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority and safeguarding responsibilities that encompass a duty of care to all our pupils. The following electronic registration protocol will be followed to register pupils:

- Class teachers will take registers recording who is present and absent using the electronic registration system every morning by 9:00 am and afternoon by 1:20 pm.
- Class teachers will mark on the register those pupils present and leave blank children who are absent. The school office will update any information regarding absences.
- Number of children in class to be recorded on class whiteboard daily to aid fire procedures.
- If electronic registration fails, staff will take register using a laminated version of register.
- The office staff will print out a Fire Attendance List each day to be kept in the Fire Drill Folder, in the main office. This list will be used to ensure all children have evacuated the building in the case of a fire or other emergency.

### **Attendance**

- ✓ We expect our pupils to attend school on time, every day that the school is open, unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so for example, illness.
- ✓ We will share attendance information with parents/carers and pupils, focusing on the link between attendance and achievement.
- ✓ We will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies, class discussion and PSHE; always reinforcing the link between attendance and achievement.
- ✓ Attendance matter will be communicated to parents/carers via text; telephone; email; letter, newsletters and school website.

### **Absence from school**

There are only two categories of absence from school:

**Authorised** – Approved **OR Unauthorised** – Not approved



Only the Headteacher (or their delegate) can approve an absence from school. That is the law. Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance. Parents should write to the Headteacher, if they wish to request an authorised absence. Examples of where an absence may be authorised are:

- Leave of absence – exceptional circumstances only
- Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital/Orthodontic appointments.
- Illness
- Child absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance, in their particular faith
- If a pupil is excluded from school for a behaviour-related incident, the absence is authorised

#### **Examples of where an absence will not be authorised:**

- Absence due to birthday, shopping trips, looking after family members, family outings.
- Holiday in term time
- Late arrival to school after the register has closed

***Unauthorised absence can lead to parents/carers being fined by the Local Authority.***

#### **Lateness**

- Pupils arriving after 9:00 am need to report to the main office where they will be asked to sign the late book and will then be marked as L (Late before registration is closed). Registration takes place at 8:50 am. Pupils should be in school by 8:45 am.
- Pupils who arrive after 9:30 am will be marked as U (Unauthorised late arrival after registration is closed). **Unauthorised sessions can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority (LA).**
- All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.
- Parents/Carers who pick their children up late after school will need to sign the late book. Regular late pick-ups will necessitate a meeting with the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher to discuss ways forward.
- Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school: letters sent to parents/carers and/or meetings arranged with the Headteacher/EWO.

#### **Medical Appointments**

- We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a pupil having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents/carers where a whole day is missed, for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided to the school.
- Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after school time and during the 12-week school holidays.

#### **Illness**

- Pupils are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some pupils will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support pupils in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on their education.
- When a pupil is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Headteacher or EWO.



- Where persistent absence occurs, as a result of illness, the school may request evidence.

### Holiday absence in term time

- Current Legislation does not allow any absence due to holiday during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances when it will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- Any parent/carer wishing to request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances will need to apply in writing to the Headteacher 2 weeks in advance. This does not mean that the absence will be automatically authorised.
- If a parent/carer takes a pupil/pupils out of school during term time and that absence is unauthorised for more than 10 sessions in a 7 school week period then this will result in the school requesting a penalty notice.
- The notice is a fine of £60 pounds per parent per child if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice; but rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted-details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice. If the fine remains unpaid after 42 days, the local authority will prosecute the Parent/Carer for non – attendance of the child at school.

### Monitoring

All absence – authorised and unauthorised – will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met. Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

All staff are encouraged to inform the Headteacher or Parent Support Worker, if they are concerned about a child's attendance. Pupils' attendance will be monitored on a regular basis by the Headteacher to ensure that all pupils are attending school. The Headteacher will meet regularly with the EWO and the Attendance Governor throughout the year to discuss attendance.

Parents/Carers will be contacted if a child's attendance shows cause for concern and issues surrounding the attendance will be discussed. A plan of action will then be put into place and the attendance will continue to be monitored. Parents/Carers may be contacted for the following reasons:

- The percentage is low (National target is 96%)
- The number of broken weeks is high
- There are a lot of unauthorised absences
- There is a lot of lateness
- Holidays are taken during term time
- A child shows signs of not wanting to come to school (School Refuser)

If the attendance continues to be poor the EWO will be informed and a formal meeting will take place with the parents, school and the EWO.

***During the school year, we wish to encourage the highest possible individual attendance rate so that children have the best opportunities to learn. All members of the school will work together to promote good attendance in a positive and constructive manner and absences will be challenged.***

### Procedure

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a child's progress will be communicated to both children and parents/carers through our attendance procedures. **Please see Appendix 1.**



## Appendix 1: Attendance Procedures

**Headteacher and Parent Support Worker monitor attendance, every 2 weeks.**

Children with the following trends are identified:

- less than 95% attendance;
- high number of broken weeks
- persistent lateness identified.

**An initial letter (Yellow Letter) sent to parents/carers of identified children to highlight attendance issue/s.**

Attendance monitored over the next 4 weeks.

**If attendance has improved, no further action is taken.**

**If attendance has not improved (Amber Letter):**

- parents/carers invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting (SAM)
- a School Attendance Plan is drawn up.
- no further absence will be authorised without medical evidence.
- attendance is monitored over a 6-week period
- SAFeh (Single Assessment Framework early help) is considered.

**If attendance has improved, no further action is taken.**

**If attendance has not improved (Red Letter):**

- Parents/Carers are invited to a formal Attendance Panel Meeting to begin the legal process
- Attendance is monitored over 6 weeks

**An attendance review meeting is held. If attendance has improved further monitoring over 6 weeks to take place to ensure this good pattern continues.**

**If no improvement:**

- a representative from South Gloucestershire County Council will attend and parents/carers may be asked to attend a court hearing.
- Other agencies such as social care, may be contacted, if necessary.



**Appendix 2: Formal Guidance (informing this policy)**

- ❖ Education Act 1996 which states if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.
- ❖ Pupil Regulations 2006 amended DFE April 2013
- ❖ Parental responsibility measures – regarding Penalty Notices (Fines) DFE November 2013
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE March 2015
- ❖ Keeping children safe in education. DFE March 2015
- ❖ Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE 2013 – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- ❖ Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – DFE December 2015
- ❖ Children missing education – DFE September 2016
- ❖ School Attendance – DFE, November 2016
- ❖ South Gloucestershire County Council local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Education Penalty Notices
- ❖ [www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk)

**The named governor for Attendance is ...**

Jamie Lee

**Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Staffing and Curriculum Committee and ratified by the Full Governing Body annually, or sooner if required.

This policy will be made available to Parents/Carers on the school website along with DfE guidance. Paper copies can be obtained from the school office on request- a small fee may apply.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

**Review:**

| Date      | Notes  |
|-----------|--|
| July 2018 | Reviewed and re-written by Headteacher (Arwa Said) |
| 15-10-18  | Reviewed by Staffing and Curriculum Committee      |
|           | Ratified by Full Governing Body                    |
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