

# Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School



## Attendance Policy

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# ***Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School***



## **Attendance Policy**

Last review date: Nov 21

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## **Responsibility for Maintaining Policy**

Jane Townsend

## **Review Date**

Annually

## **Policy Statement**

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School is committed to working with parents/carers to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

A high level of attendance at school is not only a legal requirement but is vital for all our pupils to enable a continuity of learning, thereby ensuring maximum progress for all. There is a clear link between good attendance and academic achievement, as well as enabling the development of personal, social and emotional skills.

We aim to achieve an attendance level of over 96%

We also aim to minimise levels of unauthorised attendance.

We are committed to a family of school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

## **Aims of the Policy**

- Clear procedures encouraging pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring parent/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring all teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors understand the procedures
- The commitment to allocate resources to support the policy
- Addressing attendance and inclusion issues in the curriculum
- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year

## **The Law**

### **The 1996 Education Act requires that:**

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than ten days without explanation
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law

## **You and your child**

Excellent	Your child's attendance is above 98% As well as being an excellent attender your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for their ability and late in their lives, have real opportunity in further education or the world of work
Good	Your child's attendance is 96.1%-97% Your child is likely to achieve their targets that will give them the skills they need for the next phase of their education.
Expected	Your child's attendance is 96% and has reached the schools target
Needs to Improve	Your child's attendance is 90.1 – 95.9%% This is below the national government threshold of 95%
Concern	Your child's attendance 85% – 90% You may receive a fixed penalty fine as your child is now classed as a Persistent Absentee. You will start receiving warning letters and attendance will be monitored. <b>Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for them to keep in touch with lessons and learning.</b>
Serious Concern	Your child's attendance is below 84.9% Take action now. You will receive a fixed penalty fine or further legal prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve. <b>Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be impossible for them to keep in touch with lessons and learning.</b>

### Persistent Absentee

School has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Pupils with attendance 90% or lower, will be classed as a persistent absentee.

Under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty Fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates Court.

### Partnership

#### What the school expects of our pupils and parents

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day
- That parents ensure pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g. P.E. kit
- That parents report to the School Office should they arrive after registration time and sign in
- That parents inform a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent their child attending school
- To contact school on the first day their child is absent for any reason

- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible, and to obtain an Authorised Absence Pass from the school if unavoidable
- To arrange holidays out of school time
- Parents must ensure the School Office has up to date contact details at all times including addresses, e-mails and telephone numbers.

### **What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the school**

- A broad, balanced education that is dependant on regular attendance at school
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Liaison with officers from the Local Authority to assist and support families where needed
- Regular attendance information is given to parents/carers e.g., by newsletter, individual letter, and parent evenings. When attendance is of serious concern, contact may be made by the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)
- Parents/carers are encouraged to make contact with school to discuss any issues impacting on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Any concerns or problems raised by parents/carers will be responded to quickly and sensitively by the school.

### **Procedures**

Registers are a legal document. Great care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately. Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly using the following procedures:

### **Registration**

- Registers are taken at 8.45am and 1.15pm each day.
- Registration is entered electronically in SIMS.
- Teachers are responsible for entering registration data.
- In the event of difficulties with registration on-line, an emergency paper register must be completed.
- Pupils are not to be marked present on the word of another pupil.
- Gaps are not to be left on the registration screen.
- A pupil **must** be marked absent if they are not present at the time of registration and marked as **L** if they arrive after the register has been taken.
- Once a bona fide note has been received, codes must be changed on SIMS.
- A code may already have been put in if a phone call has been received from a parent/carer or responsible adult.
- Any parent requesting leave of absence during term time must collect a request for leave of absence form from the School Office and fill it in. They can also be found on the school website. The request for leave of absence during term time form should be handed into the School Office

### **Responding to lateness**

- Pupils arriving after 8.55am are deemed as late.
- A pupil **must** be marked as **L** if they arrive after 8.55am
- Parents must report to the School Office if they arrive after 8.55am or 1.15pm.

- At 9.15 am and 1.30pm the pupil will be marked **U**

### **Responding to absence – criteria for referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Service**

- Home/school contact has not prompted an improvement in attendance
- Patterns of absence
- Poor overall attendance (e.g. below 90%)
- Every four weeks a review of individual pupil attendance takes place.  
Any pupil showing an attendance of below 90% for the last half term is discussed with the relevant adults in school. This may include the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator, the Safeguarding Officer, the Admin Officer. Contact with parents is made via letter or phone call in some cases to help resolve issues.
- If attendance continues to give cause for concern strategies will be considered and steps taken in an attempt to improve attendance and punctuality. This could include working with members of staff, the Local Authority Multi Agency Support Services (MAST) or other professionals if deemed appropriate
- When a pupil has not attended for 10 school days the school has a statutory responsibility to inform MAST.

### **Children Missing from Education**

Mrs Townsend and Mrs Merryman are the nominated members of school staff who liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures

### **Looked after children**

Mrs Townsend is the Lead Teacher who liaises with the Children and Young People's Directorate Looked After Children Team. The attendance of Looked After Children is checked daily and monitored more closely.

### **Religious Observation**

School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

- Leave may be granted for any day of religious observance if recognised by the parents/carers religious body.
- Parents/carers are requested wherever possible to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than two days be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in any academic year.

### **Children with special educational needs (SEND)**

Where SEND needs affect a pupils' attendance the school will work with parents and pupils to ensure that any supportive provision is made available where appropriate to support the child accessing mainstream education. Further information about the schools accessibility and provision can be found on the school's Local Offer: [www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk](http://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk)

### **Awards and Rewards**

- Assemblies are held regularly which celebrate good attendance.
- Improved attendance is recognised and rewarded.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Governors**

- Maintain an overview of attendance through reports provided by the Head Teacher and the Local Authority via the Head Teacher report

#### **Head Teacher**

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Liaises with the Link Advisor, Senior Inclusion Officer and other officers of the Local Authority to set targets and implement attendance strategies
- Works with Admin staff, Safeguarding Officer, Teachers and the SENCO, to implement targets, review statistics and amend the policy as necessary
- Works with other schools and agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the Family of Schools.
- Liaises with the MAST teach and school office staff and to produce and evaluate attendance statistics
- Has responsibility for monitoring the progress of children Looked After by the Local Authority

#### **Class Teachers**

- Accurately mark registers using appropriate codes, in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Attach any notes received to the register for the attention of the Admin Officer
- Report to appropriate staff any issue or problem which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a pupil
- Promote good attendance and punctuality among the class in accordance with school policy

#### **Attendance Administration Officer**

- Receives, updates and maintains accurate class registers – on-line- in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Liaises with class teachers to contact pupils missing without explanation
- Maintain SIMS attendance database and update on a daily basis
- Provides statistics about attendance
- Provides reports from SIMS to governors, Head Teacher and other school staff, Local Authority officers as requested



- Provides relevant information to Local Authority officers making contact with families regarding attendance and punctuality
- Maintains an overview of attendance and manages the day to day implementation of attendance plans and strategies
- Meets half termly with a representative from the MAST to discuss individual pupils whose attendance is of concern, e.g. by below 90%, and agree action as necessary
- Has responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education in conjunction with the Headteacher.

#### **LA Attendance and Inclusion Officer**

- Liaise with the Head Teacher, school staff and officers of the Local Authority to promote good attendance and punctuality within school, cluster and wider community
- Support the Head Teacher to produce, review and action the school's Attendance Plan and Attendance Policy
- Support the school to develop whole school strategies relating to attendance and inclusion. Offering advice, analysis and monitoring of attendance issues
- Attend appropriate meetings e.g., School Attendance and Inclusion Panel, half term review
- Take an active part in initiatives aimed at promoting attendance and punctuality e.g. being involved in Attendance & Punctuality Panels

#### **Prevention & Intervention service - MAST Representative**

- Liaise with school staff regarding the attendance and punctuality of identified pupils. Receive attendance data and agree action
- Make contact with parents/carers where concern is raised regarding a pupil's attendance.
- Discuss issues affecting attendance and punctuality with parents/carers and clearly outline legal responsibilities and requirements
- Record and maintain accurate information following contact
- Feedback to school staff within the agreed timescale
- Work with school staff, parents/carers and pupils to promote good attendance and punctuality
- Take part in initiatives to promote attendance and punctuality e.g. Attendance & Punctuality Panels

#### **Authorising Absence**

***Only the school may authorise absence.***

- Even when a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence the school will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence.

**Absence may be authorised if:**

- The pupil is too ill to attend school
- The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
- There is a close family bereavement
- The pupil/pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence

**Absence should not be authorised if:**

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday
- The pupil is absent on a request for leave of absence during term time for longer than agreed by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent on a request for leave of absence during term time not agreed by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut, because it's their birthday, to see a show.
- The pupil's attendance is below 90% and no acceptable medical evidence is provided.
- The illness lasts more than 5 days without medical evidence being provided.

**Requests for leave of absence during term time**

Following Government guidelines, no leave of absence can be authorised by school for holidays during term time. School expects all holidays to be arranged out of term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time. Where there are genuine exceptional circumstances school may authorise leave during term time and will consider each request on its own merit.

- Any requests for term time leave should be made in writing on a Request for Leave form, by the parent/carer providing details of the exceptional circumstances and stating specific start and end dates. The request should be submitted at least 20 working days in advance of the intended leave.
- The actual date that the child will return to school should always be provided by the parent/carer.
- School will inform parents in writing advising whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised, clearly stating why a decision has been taken.
- Parents/carers should contact school if any holiday delays occur.
- Parents should consider all requests to be unauthorised unless they hear otherwise.

**Requests for leave of absence during term time will not be authorised**

- When the holiday is to be taken during the first two weeks in September
- During testing weeks or in the month of May.
- When the holiday has no exceptional circumstances.

If an unauthorised holiday is taken consideration could be given to issuing a Penalty Notice (see appendix). The Prevention & Intervention Service will, after consulting with school, consider each case taking into

consideration any mitigating circumstances and make a decision. The Local Authority will inform the school of the outcome and carry out any necessary action.

It is essential that both the Local Authority and the school be consistent so that there can be no allegations of bias or favouritism. If it is seen that the policy is not being applied consistently the Local Authority will not be able to apply a Notice.

#### **Pupils at risk or classified as Persistent Absentees (<90%)**

Once a pupil falls below 90% attendance and becomes a persistent absentee, Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School have to explain to the local authority why the pupil's attendance is low. School closely monitor pupil's level of attendance and we will write to parents once attendance falls below 90%.

Letter 1 will explain that we are becoming concerned with the level of the pupil's attendance and that it will now be monitored. If improvements are not seen, parents/carers will receive Letter 2 which explains that no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence. The pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored. If improvements are not seen at this stage parents/carers will receive Letter 3 which invites them into school for an attendance review. If no improvements are made after this, School will inform the local authority who will present the parent/carer with a fine.

## Penalty Notices

New provisions have been made within the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle the issue of truancy and irregular school attendance. These include Penalty Notices and Parenting Contracts. Sheffield Local Authority officers will abide by the following Code of Conduct and government guidance set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 when administering Penalty Notices.

### 1. When a Penalty Notice may be administered

Sheffield Local Authority officers may administer a Penalty Notice in the following circumstances:

#### Phase 1 – Commenced 11/04/05

- As a result of a term time holiday that a Head Teacher has not authorised see *previous page*

#### Phase 2 – Commenced 01/09/05

- As a result of being stopped for the second time during truancy sweeps where there is an unacceptable reason for the child being absent from school and they are with their parent/carer.

#### Phase 3 – Commencing 01/01/06

- As an alternative to court prosecution by Sheffield City Council
  1. Where a child is attending school less than 90%, of which at least 20% of the absence is unauthorised without statutory defence.
  2. Where the parent/carer is judged capable of making sure their child attends regularly, but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.
  3. Penalty Notices will be used at an earlier stage than a court prosecution, before attendance problems become severe.
- 1.1. **In all of the above phases, the child must also have an attendance record of less than 90%, with at least 20% of the absence being unauthorised.**
- 1.2. When considering the use of a Penalty Notice, Sheffield Local Authority officer's first response will be in the form of a formal written warning. In exceptional circumstances, however, a Penalty may be used as a first response. This could be where the unauthorised absence was for an extended period and condoned by the parent, for example where the parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation.

Further information is available in guidance notes, a copy of which is held in school, titled ***Education Related Provisions included in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Penalty Notice***