

Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School



Attendance Policy

Last review date: May 23 (approval pending)

Next review date: May 24

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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

Partnership

What the school expects of our pupils and parents

- That parents/carers fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and ready to learn
- That parents/carers ensure pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g. P.E. kit
- That parents/carers report to the School Office to sign their child in should they arrive after their class start time
- That parents/carer inform a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent their child attending school
- That parents/carers contact school every day that their child is absent from school for any reason.
- That parents/carers arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible.
- That parents/carers arrange holidays out of school time. Further guidance is offered under the section **Term Time requests for Exceptional Leave** later in this policy
- That parents/carers 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
- Contact to be made 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 contact 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 by the class teacher.
- Registration is entered electronically in SIMS. 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 code may already have been put in the class register if a phone call or email has been received from a parent/carer or responsible adult.

- A pupil **must** be marked absent if they are not present at the time of registration. Pupils arriving after the register has been completed by the class teacher are marked as late (recorded as an 'L' in the register).
- All class registers are closed at 9.15am and 1.45pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed receive a 'U' mark, which indicates that they arrived after the register closed and that their absence was unauthorised.

Responding to lateness

- School now operates a staggered start time. Our classes start at either 8.30 or 8.45am, dependent on which class your child is in. You will be informed of your child's class start time at the beginning of the Autumn Term.
- Pupils arriving after their class start time should enter via the school office only, not via any other opened gate. This is so we can ensure that they are 'logged in' appropriately and lunches are ordered. It is also to avoid classes being disrupted and/or delayed by children arriving after the start of class.
- Parents / carers will be asked to sign in their child using the school's Inventory system. This will ask parents / carers to provide a reason for their child's lateness. We appreciate your cooperation in this regard.
- Pupils arriving after the class register has been completed by their class teacher will be marked as late (recorded as an 'L' in the register). The school will contact parents/carers in relation to punctuality when lateness is persistent. Contact with parents / carers is made via letter in some cases to help resolve issues.
- All class registers are closed at 9.15am and 1.45pm. Pupils arriving after this time will receive a 'U' mark in the register, which indicates that they arrived after the register closed. Their absence is considered unauthorised and may lead to their attendance being brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and/or Sheffield City Council's Attendance and Inclusion Officer.

Responding to absence

- The school will contact parents/carers when a pupil's absence from school is unexplained.
- Evidence may be requested in relation to the reasons given for absence.
- **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.**

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 has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence.

Absence will 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 Exceptional 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 forms can be collected from the school office and can also be found on the school website.
- 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.

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.

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 later 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. Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for them to keep in touch with lessons and learning.
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. Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be impossible for them to keep in touch with lessons and learning.

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

- Individual pupil attendance is reviewed regularly.
- Pupils with attendance 90% or lower, will be classed as a persistent absentee.
- The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year.
- Once a pupil falls below 90% attendance and becomes a persistent absentee, the school must explain to the local authority why the pupil's attendance is low.
- Any pupil showing an attendance of below 90% for the last half term is discussed with the relevant adults in school. This may include their class teacher, the Attendance Administration Officer, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and the Safeguarding Officer.
- The school will write to parents/carers in relation to persistent absenteeism.
- Letter 1 (Appendix A) 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 (Appendix B), which explains that no further absences will be authorised without evidence. The pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored.

- If improvements are not seen at this stage parents/carers will receive Letter 3 (Appendix C), 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.

Criteria for requesting support from the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)

- Case may be referred to the Attendance and Inclusion Service if home/school contact has not prompted an improvement in attendance, or there are existing patterns of absence or poor overall attendance (e.g. below 90%).
- 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 Miss Marshall 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. 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

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

Dear Parent/Carer

NOTICE OF ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE

Pupil:

Class:

Date:

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance is currently %. Letters are sent to parents where their child's attendance is below 93%. Our school target is 96% and attendance below 90% is considered persistently absent.

Because of this, we will closely monitor your child's attendance for the next three weeks. School expect to see improvements in your child's attendance. It is important therefore, that you contact school on the first day of any absence or if there is any problem that may be causing your child to miss school. Absences may be unauthorised unless you provide a valid reason that is accepted by school.

Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School is committed to raising the profile of attendance in school, it is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day.

Please give this your urgent attention. If you wish to discuss the matter further please contact Jane Townsend, Rob Barker or Carly Redgate.

Yours faithfully

Jane Townsend

Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer,

Date:

Notice of attendance percentage and need to improve

Pupil:

Class:

I wrote to you recently informing you that I would be monitoring your child's attendance as it was causing concern. Improvements have not been made and because of this Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School will closely monitor your child's attendance for the next 3 weeks. If your child's attendance fails to improve you may be invited to an "Attendance Meeting" where we can discuss the matter in more detail and offer support to enable it to be improved. School will not authorise any future absences unless it is for exceptional circumstances authorised by myself or medical reasons with medical proof. Any absence not authorised will be recorded by a (O) on your child's attendance record.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time, and 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.

Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School is committed to raising the profile of attendance and punctuality in school; it is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day.

Please give this your urgent attention. If you wish to discuss the matter further please contact myself, Mrs Priest or Miss Redgate.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Townsend
Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer,

Date:

Request to Attendance Review Meeting

Pupil:

Class:

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance is currently _____ and has not shown significant improvement since our last letter.

Because of this Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School requires you to be present at an Attendance Review Meeting to be held at Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School on: ## Date

An Attendance Review Meeting is to discuss the issues surrounding your child's poor attendance/punctuality and offer support to you and your family to help improve your child's attendance. The review meeting will be conducted by a representative from Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School and an attendance representative from the Local Authority. It is important that you attend the meeting in person. Failure to attend this review may result in Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School applying for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, and 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.

Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School is committed to raising the profile of attendance and punctuality in school; it is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day.

Please give this your urgent attention. If the time and date stated is not convenient please contact school to rearrange.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Townsend
Headteacher

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***