

Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2018/19



Policy reviewed during the Safeguarding Meeting on 11th June 2019
Petra Sidney-Wilmot, Attendance Officer

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Introduction:

Stephenson Memorial Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind.

The education statutory guidelines state that all children are expected to have an attendance of at least 96%. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a full time education. At Stephenson Memorial Primary School we put in place appropriate procedures to encourage our children to have excellent and punctual attendance. We strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all. We reward children whose attendance is excellent and make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason are prevented from coming to school.

The law requires that all schools have an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. National codes enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way that complies with regulations.

Definitions:

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and a parent or carer has notified the school. It is expected that the parent or carer will contact the school before 9am on the first morning their child is ill. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting the parent or carer to seek an explanation for the absence, which will be via phone call or text. If contact is still not made, the attendance team will likely undertake a home visit.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- If a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- A Holiday taken within a school term

Attendance is monitored closely in school and parents are informed in writing when their child's attendance is unsatisfactory. If poor attendance continues, the attendance team will arrange meetings with parents. The governors, supported by the local authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parent or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school.

Lateness:

The school bell will begin ringing at 8.50. The school gates will close at 8.55 and your child is expected to be registered and ready to start lessons at 9.00am prompt. This enables a more settled start to the day.

Lateness will be monitored in the same way as attendance.

- If your child arrives after the school bell, they must be accompanied by an adult and signed in on the late register.
- A full explanation for lateness is required for monitoring purposes.
- If families are having difficulties the Attendance Team are always available for advice and support.

Requests for Leave of Absence:

Forms for requesting leave of absence MUST be completed and are available from the school office.

Department of Education Attendance Regulations, from September 2013, dictated that Headteacher's could no longer grant leave of absence for holidays during term time, only in exceptional circumstances (Service Families). The Headteacher can recommend a Penalty Notice be issued by the Local Authority for every holiday taken in term time. The governors at Stephenson agreed as of September 2018 that if your child's attendance is below 95% on their return, this will be forwarded to the Local Authority who will issue a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is a fine of £60, per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child, after this date but within 28 days. If the holiday is taken at the beginning of the school year, previous attendance history will be taken into account.

Long-term Absence:

When a child is absent from school for an extended period of time, through illness or exclusion, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period or be a repetitive absence, the school will arrange for a Flexi-School Agreement to be put in place.

Rewards for Good Attendance:

All children who have 98% attendance at the end of each term, will receive a certificate which will be awarded in assembly. There are special certificates awarded to children with 100% attendance and a celebration event will take place at the end of the academic year.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving.
- Take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records can be transferred.
- Let us know when you move.

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

At Stephenson Memorial Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to be safe and therefore to be cared for in a way that ensures her/his safety and meets her/his individual needs. We recognise that all children need protection at all times from anything or anyone that may cause them harm and work together following the Child Protection Policy to ensure this. We respect all members of the school's community and treat information with confidentiality.