

Stanford Junior and Infant School



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2017-2020

*“Living Together,
Learning Together”*

Adopted by Governors – Sep 2017
Review due – Sep 2019

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

It is very important that children attend school regularly in order to reach their full potential. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends school. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education: School Attendance (2014) which states that schools should:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2. Ensure every child has access to full-time education
3. Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly. A high level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils following their admission to Stanford Junior & Infant School. It is very important, therefore, parents should make sure their child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

RATIONALE

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital children are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

ABSENCES

Parents should inform school on the first day of their child's absence by telephone by 9.15am. Failure to do so results in a telephone call or text message from the office, and may result in the absence being unauthorised, if we cannot contact the parent. The parent should also state how long they anticipate their child will be absent.

The Education Welfare Service also monitor absences on a regular basis and will address any irregularities with pupils' attendance. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance, the fast track system may be implemented. This begins with parents attending a School Attendance Panel meeting. Targets will be set for the following month and if these are not achieved parents will be requested to attend a Local Authority Panel meeting. If their attendance still does not improve this could result in a court appearance and a fine.

TYPES OF ABSENCE

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

APPOINTMENTS

If a child has a medical appointment (e.g. dentist, doctor, hospital etc) in school time, the school requires evidence to authorise this absence. Therefore, an appointment card should be provided by the parents and copied by the school for the child's file. Failure to do this will result in the absence being unauthorised.

LATENESS / PUNCTUALITY

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school is used to give out instructions or organise work. If a child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

The school day begins at 8:55am and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time as morning registration takes place then.

- All lateness (after 8:55am) is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Lateness is recorded on the child's permanent record which follows throughout their school life and is monitored by the Admin Officer and the Learning Mentor. If a child is regularly late the Learning Mentor will contact the parent to discuss this and offer support. School works closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) through regular meetings on subjects such as letters of concern, home visits and more formal attendance procedures.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

LEGISLATION

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

If by working together we are unable to secure your child's regular school attendance we will ask the Education Welfare Service to support and in some cases enforce attendance.

The Education Welfare Service may use the following legislation to secure attendance via the fast track to securing the attendance process.

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

The legislation allows the use of the following sanctions:

- Parenting contracts
- Parenting orders
- Education supervision orders
- Penalty notices

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our website and through our regular school newsletter

- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by awarding the 'Attendance Cup' to the class with the highest attendance each week.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and termly prizes.

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. She will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

THE ROLE OF STAFF

It is the responsibility of all staff to implement the Attendance Policy consistently. It is the responsibility of all staff to create a climate for learning that promotes positive attendance. Staff should also:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

The Attendance Policy is shared with parents and they are asked to support it. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law. Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

The Governing Body is responsible for setting down general guidelines on attendance and reviewing the effectiveness of these guidelines. The Governors support the Headteacher in carrying out these guidelines.

The Headteacher has the day-to-day authority to implement and make decisions regarding the Attendance Policy. The Governors are responsible for monitoring that the policy is applied consistently.

THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the Behaviour and Attendance Policy consistently throughout the school and to report to Governors when requested on the effectiveness of the policy.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure the Health, Safety and welfare of the children.

The Headteacher will support staff by implementing the policy, setting standards of behaviour and supporting staff in the implementation of the policy.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8:55am, and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are: "rare, significant, or unavoidable"; which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the vast majority of cases a holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to be made in writing by the parents in advance, as the Department for Education (DfE) has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences **after** they have been taken. This letter should detail the reason why the request is being made.

Permission will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher. Penalty notices may be issued to each child and each parent by the Local Authority when leave is not authorised.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the 10% thresholds set down in parents/carers may be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

PENALTY NOTICES AND OTHER LEGAL MEASURES

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness are available to schools to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts
- Parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution.

A **Fixed Penalty Notice** may be issued for:

- low school attendance
- term time holidays
- being in a public place during school hours when excluded from school

The Penalty Notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Education Welfare Officer will proceed with prosecution.

A **Penalty Notice** will be issued per parent, per child (for example, if there are 2 parents and 2 children, this will be a total of 4 Penalty Notices).

Please note that **Penalty Notices** are only issued on the request of the school. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. If you feel a Penalty Notice has been issued in error, contact the school in the first instance.

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE COLLABORATIVE

If attendance is poor (usually below 90%) the school may engage with the Behaviour and Attendance Collaborative (BAC) for additional support and guidance.

The Behaviour and Attendance Collaborative (BAC) brings together schools and academies to work with and support each other to help children and young people who are experiencing difficulties fitting in to their school environment.

The BAC is a voluntary non-statutory group which involves all schools and academies in North East Lincolnshire. It aims to promote 'sector-led' improvement in relation to children and young people who are the responsibility of participating schools or academies. Referrals to the BAC process can only be made when the child or young person is registered at a school or academy in North East Lincolnshire.

RECORD PRESERVATION

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and for reviewing the policy annually in partnership with staff and the Governing Body. Consistency of use will, therefore, be monitored throughout the year.

APPENDIX

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

What to do if your child is absent

First day absence:

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence - you must do this even if you have already telephoned us

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you - this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer and/or Headteacher if absences persist
- refer the matter to the BAC Panel if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Third day absence:

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family. A trained member of the school will visit the home address to try and establish contact.

Ten days' absence:

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days, although it is likely we may do so before the 10 day threshold has been met. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or on-going absence:

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child continues to be absent without contact from parents/carers, a letter will be sent to parents explaining our concerns and requesting the school is contacted that day.

Fines and Penalty Notices

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each

parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid North East Lincolnshire Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Penalties are to be paid to North East Lincolnshire Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

What to do if your child is trying to avoid coming to school

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact the school to openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons - difficulties with school work, perceived bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

How to encourage your child to attend school

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education. For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

Transferring Schools

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to:

1. Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing

2. If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through child participation in public performances, theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Headteachers can authorise this absence.

For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/licensing/general-licensing-and-street-trading/child-employment/>
For national advice see: www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotlandwales.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12-month period to be able to request leave for work purposes.

Signed By



Chair of Governors:

Date: 28th September 2017



Headteacher:

Date: 28th September 2017