

# **STANNINGTON INFANT SCHOOL**

## **Policy for Attendance and Term Time Leave**

Last review date March 2019





## **Stannington Infant School Policy for Attendance and Term Time Leave**

### **Stannington Infant School Vision**

- **To encourage a caring and positive attitude amongst the children towards all others and their environment.**
- **To provide a challenging, creative and rich curriculum which will develop curiosity, confidence and independence.**
- **To provide an inclusive, safe, secure, healthy and happy environment.**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

- Stannington Infant School is committed to maximising the achievement of all pupils. Good attendance and punctuality are vital if children are to attain their full potential as learners.
- As children start school their patterns and routines of school attendance quickly become habits. Poor routines are hard to disestablish further up the school system. A prevention and early intervention programme that helps to establish good habits can underpin the whole of a child's school career – and potentially their life opportunities.
- Young children, however, are dependent upon the adults in their life to get them to school regularly and on time. Therefore the focus must be to establish good habits and work closely with parents to improve attendance.
- The school operates within a framework of local schools, including the local secondary school and is fully committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parents/carers.

### **AIMS AND TARGETS**

- To enable all pupils to achieve their maximum potential
- To monitor and track pupils' attendance and punctuality through effective systems
- To encourage parents/carers to play the vital role of supporting the school by supporting their child to achieve good attendance and punctuality
- To work in partnership with parents, to help pupils succeed
- To promote good attendance, by recognising and rewarding good and improved attendance by individuals and groups of pupils.

## **THE LAW**

The legal requirements placed on parents, schools and LAs by the 1996 Education Act and related legislation are as follows:

- Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Failure by parents to ensure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law. (Education Act 1996 Section 444)
- The LA must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The LA has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than 10 days without explanation
- Fixed penalties can be issued by the school where the criteria for such a notice are met

## **PARTNERSHIP**

### **What the school expects of parents:**

- To fulfil their responsibility by encouraging their children to attend school.
- To ensure they inform the school office of the reason for absence on the first day their child is unable to attend school.
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the Headteacher whenever any problem, (other than illness of the child), occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- To arrange holidays out of term time
- To inform the class teacher and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments or holidays and ensure the continuity of their child's education by taking holidays during the school holiday period and, wherever possible, arranging appointments outside the school day (only the Headteacher can authorise holiday absence).
- To follow the guidance on Term Time Leave.

## **The schools response to requests for leave during term time:**

Following new Government guidelines no leave of absence can be authorised by school for holidays during term time from September 2013. 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 merits.

- Any requests for term time leave should be made in writing, 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 delays occur.
- Failure to return to school on the expected day after leave may result in a student being taken off roll at Stannington Infant School and they will need to reapply for a place. Parents should be aware that this process may not always be successful given the popularity of the school and the shortage of places in specific year groups.

Authorisation will **not** be given:

- During national testing weeks
- During the first two weeks of September
- When a student's attendance is below 95%

**If you achieve 100% attendance (190 days) you still have an amazing 175 days holiday.**

## **Leave for religious observance:**

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.

## **Where no leave is requested – Family Emergency**

The school recognises that there may be circumstances in which leave cannot be requested in advance, for example family bereavement. Whilst these are difficult

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situations parents / carers are still required to contact the school at the earliest opportunity and submit a written request for leave. The written request can be made on behalf of the parent/carer by a nominated person.

### **What parents and children can expect of the school:**

- A broad and balanced curriculum that is dependent upon regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- First day contact with parents whose children are absent by phone call
- Prompt action on any problems notified or identified.
- Close liaison with the Attendance and Inclusion Service to assist and support parents and children where needed.

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

### **1.Registration Procedures**

[See Appendix 1 for class teacher guidelines]

- Registration times are 9am each morning and 1.10pm in the afternoon. Close of registration is 9.10am and 1.20pm.
- Staff and pupils should be present to ensure that the registration process begins promptly.
- Staff should insert a mark on the register for every child whether it is a present or absent mark.
- If pupils arrive at school after registration time, they will be deemed to be late and recorded as L on the register **up to twenty minutes after registers close (9.30am)**. After that time they are recorded as U (unauthorised absence).
- Each Friday the administration officer monitors absence and lateness.
- Codes are given to staff at the start of each academic year and are kept in the registration folder.
- The fire register must be completed each morning and annotated should a child arrive or leave during the day.

### **2. Punctuality – responding to lateness**

- Pupils after registration time must go to the School Office to be registered.
- If a pupil is frequently late, the teacher will talk to the parent and urge them to ensure that their child arrives at school on time. If the problem persists the Headteacher will be informed and a letter will be sent to the parent. (*See Appendix 2*)
- If this pattern of lateness is repeated or persists parents will be invited in to discuss the issue with the Headteacher.
- If pupils continue to arrive late then a referral may be made to MAST (Multi Agency Support Team) for support.

No child will be punished for arriving in school late. At this age the children are reliant on parents/carers bringing them to school.

### **3. Absence – responding to absence**

- Parents are asked to contact the school either verbally or in writing on the first day that their child is unable to attend school, giving the reason for the absence.
- If the absence lasts longer than one week parents are asked to contact the school at the beginning of the second week to inform us how their child is progressing and the expected date of return to school.
- If a child has been absent from school and no explanation has been received office staff will phone or text on the first day of absence to enquire regarding the reason. If no contact is made a letter will be sent home to parents which should be completed and returned to the school office. [Appendix 3]

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation [telephone call or personal contact] in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered, or when no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

#### **Absence should be authorised if:**

- The pupil is absent with Leave (defined as ‘Leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body’)
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parent belongs.
- The school is not within walking distance of the pupil’s home, and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following
  - i. the pupil’s transport to and from school
  - ii. boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school
  - iii. enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at or nearer their home.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a family bereavement
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and school has given Leave of absence.
- The pupil is attending another school in connection with an application for a place there.
- The pupil is involved in an *exceptional* special occasion eg family wedding. In authorising such absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil’s overall pattern of attendance should be considered.

#### **Responding to and Maintaining Good Attendance**

- Each week the best class attendance is celebrated in assembly and they are presented with an award
- Every term pupils with 95%+ attendance are rewarded

## **Responding to Poor Attendance**

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance the teacher or attendance clerk will bring these concerns to the attention of the Headteacher. The Headteacher will then after, discussions with the class teacher, decide on the most appropriate course of action:

- Talk to the parents /carers regarding the concerns
- Send a letter to the child's home informing the parents/carers of the concerns
- Refer to the rapid response officer from the Attendance and Inclusion Service.
- Parenting contracts may be considered for the parent / carer of a compulsory school aged child who is failing to attend school regularly.

### **Criteria for referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Service**

Reasons for involving the above service may include:

- School has alerted the parents/carers to the concerns and there has been no improvement in attendance.
- Patterns of absence have emerged (eg. Mondays and Fridays)
- Attendance levels have dropped below 85%

Provision has been made within the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle the issue of truancy and irregular school attendance. From January 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 Stannington Infant School will use Penalty Notices. The issuing and administering of Penalty Notices remains solely with the CYPD.

## **Collecting and Analysing Data**

- Weekly monitoring of individual and class attendance will be carried out by the school's Attendance Clerk.
- Half-termly monitoring of individuals by the Headteacher and the attendance clerk
- Half termly monitoring of individual, class and year groups by the Headteacher or Attendance Clerk and the Senior Access and Inclusion Officer.
- Termly monitoring as above by the Headteacher and the Intervention and Prevention Worker.
- Annually by the Headteacher, Access and Inclusion Service and the DfES.

### **The purpose of the above is to:**

- Enable the school to identify problems early
- To praise and reward good and improved attendance
- To have up to date data readily available to inform parents
- Provide annual data for the LA and DfES
- Provide attendance data for parents on their child's annual report

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Class teacher	Mark register promptly and accurately at the beginning of each school session. Amend registers if children arrive late between 9.00am-9.30am by entering the 'L' code. Record reasons for absence on the register. Record on fire register names, date and time of any child who leaves school during the school day. Take the fire registers out to assembly point and use during fire drill/alarm. Discuss any concerns re attendance with Headteacher.
Office personnel	Amend registers if children arrive late by entering the 'L' or 'U' code after 9.30am. Record on the sessions absence names, date and time of any child who leaves or returns to school during the school day. Record in the absence book children not present and the reason for the absence. Add this information to class registers.
Attendance Officer	Input attendance data accurately. Monitor attendance weekly and follow up any unexplained absences by sending out letters to parents/carers. Report any concerns or emerging patterns of absence to the Headteacher. Provide Headteacher and Senior Inclusion Officer with statistical data as required.
Headteacher	Oversee the implementation of the Attendance Policy. Regularly monitor and evaluate data and provide information for governors, LA and DfES. Liaise with Access and Inclusion Service on strategic development.
Intervention and Prevention Worker MAST	To respond promptly to referrals from school and provide written feedback of action taken

### **Children Missing from Education**

Sarah Binns is the nominated member of staff to liaise with the CYPD Missing Children Team.

### **Children in Public Care**

Sarah Binns is the co-ordinator who liaises with the CYPD Looked After Children Team. The attendance of Looked after Children is monitored in line with other data collection on a half termly basis.



## **STRATEGIES**

Attendance at Stannington Infant School is good but we are not complacent and are continually striving to improve. We use the following strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality:

- The school day starts promptly and in a friendly and interesting way.
- Termly and annual 'above school target % attendance' certificates presented in assembly.
- Recognition of improved attendance.
- Information on the attendance policy given to all new families. Attendance is highlighted in the Partnership with Parents booklet. Parents are given regular reminders on the half termly newsletters.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The policy and attendance practices will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Attendance Clerk, Headteacher and Senior Inclusion Officer. Data and targets will be analysed with regard to the effectiveness of the policy and any recommendations for amendments to the policy or changes in practice will be discussed with staff and Governors. Parents will be informed promptly of any changes.

Approved by Governors March 2019

## Registration Procedure Guidelines

1. Please log into SIMS. Net using Username and password. Please ask a member of the office team for this if needed.
2. Click Focus, Attendance, Take Register. Place a / for children who are present.
3. Take care not to overwrite any codes the office staff may have already inputted.
4. Click save.
5. If a child is absent and no reason has been given record an N.

CODE	Description	Category
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Authorised (Attending approved educational activity)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another code or description)	Authorised
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)	Authorised
G	<b>Family Holiday (NOT Agreed or days in excess of agreement)</b>	<b>Unauthorised</b>
H	<b>Family Holiday (Agreed) exceptional circumstances only</b>	<b>Authorised</b>
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised
J	Interview	Authorised (Attending approved educational activity)
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised
O	Unauthorised absence - not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised
P	Approved sporting activity	Authorised (Attending approved educational activity)
R	Religious observance	Authorised
S	Study leave - Study leave should be used sparingly and only for Year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations	Authorised
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised
V	Educational visit or trip	Authorised (Attending approved educational activity)
W	Work experience - Work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996.	Authorised (Attending approved educational activity)
D	Dual registration i.e. pupil attending another establishment – indicates dual registration not attendance	Attending approved educational activity

*Appendix 2. (model punctuality letter)*

Date

Dear Parent/guardian of .....

We keep records of all pupils' attendance and punctuality. .... arrives late for school on a regular basis. Of the ..... mornings since we started back in September, ..... has been late for ..... of them. By my rough calculation, ..... has lost almost two days education due to lateness. This is unacceptable.

Could I respectfully remind you that school **and learning** begins at 9.00am? Would you please ensure that .....arrives promptly for school? Whole class teaching takes place at 9.00 each day and this sets the tone and expectation for learning.

Many thanks in anticipation of an improvement in this situation. I am more than happy to discuss this further with you if you wish – please contact school to make an appointment, or pop in. I will continue to monitor ..... punctuality and should it not improve I will discuss with you a referral to the MAST team for support.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Binns  
Headteacher

D  
ate

To the parent/carer(s) of..... Class.....

Dear Parent/Carer

Your child was absent from school on .....and is unauthorised as we have not yet been provided a reason for this. Please complete the slip below and return to school tomorrow so that we can update our records.

If you do not provide a valid reason for your child's absence it will remain unauthorised. I also inform you that our registers are checked regularly by the Local Authority you could be contacted further by then to discuss this.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours etc

.....**Reply here**.....

My child (name ).....class.....

Was absent from school on.....

Reason for absence.....

.....

Did your child visit the doctor?

Signed.....Relationship to child.....date.....

Any other information

#### Appendix 4 Blank attendance monitoring record

Period: (dates)

Value Range: Less Than 95 percent (colour coded yellow / red for less than 90%)

Class:

Name	Year	Gender	SEND	PP	% Attend	Previous year	Comments	Key Staff

Appendix 5 Term time leave request

**REQUEST FOR TERM TIME LEAVE: APPLICATION FORM**

This form should be completed and returned to the school office.

**Requests must be made 20 days in advance by Parent / Carer to enable time for schools to consider.**

The form will be completed below and returned.

**You must book an appointment with the Head Teacher to discuss your application.**

Name of pupil/s:			
Siblings in other schools:			
Name of parents / carers			
Telephone no:			
E-mail:			
Dates of request:	From:	To:	No. of school days:
Why are you requesting leave of absence during term time?			
Do you consider there to be exceptional circumstances? (Please indicate & attach relevant evidence to support your circumstances)			YES / NO
What steps have you taken to minimise the impact of the leave on your child's learning?			
Where will you be staying during this leave period? Please provide the full address & emergency contact details:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I confirm that the information on this form is true.</li> <li>I agree to keep the school informed of any changes to my travel arrangements or if my child is unable to return to school on the due date.</li> <li><b>I am aware that if my child does not return to school by the date provided that he/she is at risk of losing their place at this school.</b></li> <li>I am aware that I may be fined and/or prosecuted for any time which my child is absent from school that has not been authorised by the Headteacher.</li> </ul>			
Signed by Parent / Carer:		Print name & relationship to child:	Date:
<b>FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY and return to Parents / Carers</b>			
Date request received:		Number of days requested:	
Signed:		Number of days authorised:	
Dated:		Number of days unauthorised:	
Attendance %:	Application Approved:		Application Denied:
Comments:			

Dear Parent / Carer,

**Attendance (date)**

We write to inform you our school target for attendance is 97% and that your child's attendance this school year is below 95%.

DfE's recommended minimum attendance is 90% and if your child's attendance falls below this it is considered to be 'persistent absenteeism' and monitored by the Local Authority. Attendance below 90% can seriously undermine your child's progress at school and our school target is to have attendance over 97%.

We enclose a Registration Certificate for your child and would be grateful if you would check this, so that we have the right information on our register.

Please let me know if we can assist you in ensuring that the % attendance increases over the remaining school year. In some circumstances we can access support from other professionals such as Attendance Officers or School Nurses.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this any further.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

Dear Parent / Carer,

**Attendance (date)**

We write to inform you our school target for attendance is 97% and that your child's attendance this school year is below 90%.

DfE's recommended minimum attendance is 90% and if your child's attendance falls below this it is considered to be 'persistent absenteeism' and monitored by the Local Authority. Attendance below 90% can seriously undermine your child's progress at school and our school target is to have attendance over 97%.

Whilst there may be good reasons as to why your child has been absent from school, I am duty bound to bring to your attention your child's poor attendance record. Please remember, a 90% result sounds good if in a test, but 90% attendance means your child is missing the equivalent of half a day a week.

We enclose a Registration Certificate for your child and would be grateful if you would check this, so that we have the right information on our register.

Please let me know if we can assist you in ensuring that the % attendance increases over the remaining school year. In some circumstances we can access support from other professionals such as Attendance Officers or School Nurses.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this any further.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher



<Date>

## STANNINGTON INFANT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEETING - CONFIDENTIAL

RE: <Name of child>

% Attendance	Number of Lates

Thank you for attending today's attendance meeting for your child. Please note the actions that we have agreed below:

Action	Timescale

Also discussed:

- 

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 95% throughout a pupil's schooling. Our school's target is set at 97%.

Signed: ..... Name: ..... (school)

Signed: ..... Name: ..... (parent)

Office Use:		
Copy given to parent	Date:	Initials:
Scanned to CPOMS	Date:	Initials:
Review on	Date:	Initials: