

Stockton Primary School Attendance Policy

This policy is based on the Stowe Valley MAT Attendance Policy with adaptations to meet the needs of the Stockton setting.

Philosophy

Stockton Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement depends on good attendance. It is the policy of our school to celebrate both. All staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. We recognise that parents have a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems. We will provide effective and efficient communications with students, parents, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support to meet our objectives.

This policy is based on current government guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022' and Statutory Regulations.

Objectives;

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, students and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Definitions

In this policy there are some key definitions which will be used, we have referenced the meaning of these terms below for ease of understanding:

Persistent Absence - Where a student's attendance figure reaches 90% or below, they are deemed as 'persistently absent' from school.

Severe Absence - Where a student is absent from school more than they are present, therefore with an attendance figure of 50% or below, they are deemed as 'severely absent'.

Parents - For the purpose of this policy a parent means; All natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Vulnerable students - For the purpose of this policy vulnerable students are those who;
Have a social worker or previously had a social worker;
Is a Child looked after;
Are Children with an Educational health care plan;
Are Children who are severely absent (their attendance in school is 50% or below

The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given - the permission for an absence in advance from the school. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations in 2013 only allowing Head Teachers to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances. Holiday requests will not be granted.

Anne Bedgood, Headteacher and DSL is also the attendance lead here at Stockton Primary.

Attendance of all groups of pupils is monitored rigorously and staff are competent in dealing with 'children missing in education' – see link with Child Protection Policy.

Day to Day Procedures linked to attendance

Children are expected to be on school site by 9.50 and the bell is rung at 9.55 signalling the start of the school day. Registers are open until 9.10. After 9.10 a student is considered to be late.

If a pupil is absent and no message has been received either via the office answerphone, speaking in person to our administrator or leaving a message via classdojo – the administrator will telephone parents/ carers to establish why the pupil is absent.

If no response is received on the second day of absence the DSL will attempt to make contact with the family and if this persists to a third day – a home visit will be made.

A child on a Child Protection Plan who is absent without explanation for more than a day will lead to this information being shared with Children's Services.

Parents are expected to phone every other day if their child's absence is ongoing.

After five consecutive days of absence, we will ask for medical evidence of the reason for absence. If a child is receiving medication such as anti-biotics the school will agree to administer this providing the parent completes a medical form. If the absence is likely to persist the DSL may arrange a home visit to see the child and discuss plans to support the family during this time.

Authorised Absence

Absence from school is authorised for:

- Illness and other medical reasons such as surgery, check ups etc.
- Days of religious observance/celebration
- If LA transport fails e.g. children who arrive at school in a taxi

Absence may also be authorised where a request form has been submitted and authorised by the Headteacher. The circumstances are at the Headteacher's discretion within the confines of the law but may include:

- Family bereavement
- Family emergency

Leave during term time

Term time holidays cause disruption to a child's education and cannot be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents do not have a right to access holidays during term time and may be in breach of their legal obligation to send their children to school. If leave is to be granted the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. Applications can only be considered if submitted by the resident parent. Applications must be made in advance and failure to do so may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice. The school works in conjunction with Warwickshire Attendance Service.

Incentives to attend

We strive to ensure that school is a welcoming, nurturing and exciting place for children to be – thus promoting their natural desire to be here – we work hard to meet the needs of individual pupils and make reasonable adjustments to support attendance. Children are rewarded for good attendance by receiving praise, dojo points, half termly certificates and recognition in celebration assemblies.

September 2024

Anne Bedgood