



Attendance Policy

At Stopsley Community Primary School and Nursery we believe that high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are essential for all children.

The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. We believe that the most important factor in promoting excellent attendance is ensuring that children are happy in school and therefore want to be in school every day.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Legal Requirements

The law (Education Act 1996) requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised

Parents / carers have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and arrive at school on time. The duty for parents / carers to ensure their child receives a suitable "efficient full-time education" is set out in section 7 of the Education Act 1996. Parents / carers are guilty of an offence if their child fails to attend regularly.

Parents / carers must:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Notify the school office by 9.30am if their child is absent and state the reason for their absence
- Provide school with medical evidence if their child's absence continues for more than one week
- Ensure that any routine medical/dental appointments are made out of school time where possible

School Procedure:

- If any child is absent and school has not been notified on the first day, the Attendance Leads telephone the child's parents / carers (priority is made to parents / carers of those children whom we know bring themselves to school)
- In the event contact cannot be made on the first day, the Attendance Leads record this on the register. An unexplained absence letter is sent home within one week asking parents / carers to explain the absence. In some cases, a home visit may be carried out
- If the school is satisfied with the reasons provided, there is no further action. The school continues to monitor and expects no less than 96% attendance
- If the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, this is coded as 'O' unauthorised and the parent / carer may be required to supply medical evidence
- On the second day of absence, when there has been no contact from the parent / carer, a possible paired home visit takes place
- The Attendance Leads continually monitor the attendance of all pupils and in the first instance telephone the parents / carers of children with attendance below 95% (unless there is a known reason for the absence e.g., hospitalisation, authorised leave of absence, medical etc)
- If there is no significant improvement following this telephone call, the Attendance Leads will send an attendance concern letter, either by post or email
- If there is no significant improvement following this letter, the Attendance Leads will invite parents / carers in for a meeting and will notify the Senior Leadership Team
- If a child has eight sessions of unauthorised absence in a 12-week period, the Attendance Leads will issue a Penalty Notice Warning Letter and will monitor for improvement over a six-week period
- If there are a further six sessions of unauthorised absence during the six-week monitoring period, the Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice (fine)

Stopsley Community Primary School and Nursery uses an electronic registration system which maintains accurate data on an individual and whole school basis. This includes recording absence using the following DfE issued absence codes:

- B Educated off-site*
- C Authorised circumstances*
- D Dual registration*
- E Excluded*
- G Family holiday (not agreed)*
- H Family holiday (agreed)*
- I Illness*
- J Interview*
- L Late (before register closed)*
- M Medical/dental appointment*
- N No reason provided*
- O Unauthorised absence*
- P Approved sporting activity*
- R Religious observance*
- S Study leave*
- T Traveller absence (travelling for occupational purposes)*
- U Late (after register closed)*
- V Educational visit*
- W Work experience*
- X Not required to be in school (i.e., non-compulsory school age children)*
- Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (i.e., school site closure)*

Lateness

Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they miss vital teaching, information, and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons which can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence. Any children arriving late must report to reception accompanied by their parent / carer to sign in. If a child arrives 15 minutes after the register has been taken, they are marked as being on site, but this does not count as a present mark and shows as an **unauthorised lateness**. This unauthorised lateness affects their attendance record.

Authorised Absences

There are times where occasional absence from school is unavoidable and these would therefore be recorded as an authorised absence. Absence from school will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs
- Unavoidable/emergency medical and dental appointments (with medical evidence)
- Extreme family emergencies
- Children from the traveller community travelling with parents / carers for occupational purposes – agreed by the Headteacher, and Luton Borough Councils Access to Education Officer

Unauthorised Absences

Unfortunately, there are some occasions when parents / carers choose to take their children out of school for unacceptable reasons. Where a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend school regularly, and the absence is unauthorised, the parent / carer is guilty of an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996. This may lead to prosecution in the magistrates' court and if found guilty, parents / carers may be liable to a fine of up to £2,500 or a period of imprisonment. The following reasons for absence will be recorded as unauthorised:

- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by school
- Looking after siblings or unwell parents / carers
- Unexplained absences
- Birthdays
- Children who are regularly late to school, arriving later than 15 minutes after the register has been taken
- Shopping trips
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

- Lack of childcare provision before or after school
- Difficulties in transporting child to and from school

These are examples only and the list is not exhaustive.

Holidays During Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force from September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The law does not give any entitlement to parents / carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances only and it is only for the Headteacher to determine what is truly exceptional.

It is acknowledged that time away with family is a much-valued childhood experience and the cost of holidays outside of term time are high. However, the Headteacher has a legal obligation to fulfil statutory duties and has no alternative but to refuse term time leave in all but the most extenuating circumstances.

Parents / carers should complete a leave of absence form. These are available from the school office or on the school website to download.

Examples of exceptional circumstances:

- Close member family bereavement (up to 3 days)
- Immediate family member funeral (up to 3 days)
- Immediate family member wedding (up to 5 days if travel abroad is involved)
- Unavoidable delay in travel arrangements due to adverse weather conditions, e.g., volcanic ash
- Proven parental employment restrictions
- Unavoidable delay in travel due to being deemed unfit to travel by medical practitioner with proof provided to the school for the period of absence (provided leave of absence has already been granted)

For further information please refer to our school's Leave of Absence Policy, which can be downloaded on our website or obtained from the school office.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

The school acknowledges that good attendance should be recognised and rewarded. Each week, an attendance review takes place with each class on a set day and at a set time. This review is a whole-class review and is led by the Class Teacher, or a Cover Supervisor in their absence. The review looks at positive attendance for the week and sets informal next step targets for individual pupils who have not shown positive attendance over the week. The importance of punctuality is also discussed, and pupil success reviewed.

Weekly Class Attendance

Each week the class (or classes) with the highest attendance are announced in a whole-school assembly and the children in the winning class/es score a point. These points are totalled up over the term and at the end of the term, the highest scoring class wins a class prize. This encourages the children to work as a team towards good attendance.

Termly Attendance

At the end of each term, any children with 100% attendance (or close) are rewarded with a certificate and an attendance medal. When a child first wins a medal, they receive a bronze medal. When they win their second medal, they receive a silver medal and when they win their third medal, they receive a gold medal. Each week, all pupils with 100% attendance (including no late arrivals) are entered into a raffle. The raffle is drawn at the end of each term and prizes are awarded to two pupils (one from each Key Stage) and also to two families (one from each Key Stage). The class with the highest attendance at the end of each term will also win a class reward. The list of choices for class awards is voted for each year by the School Council.

Date: July 2024

Review date: July 2025