



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
- Engage appropriately with school staff if meeting with them to discuss their child's attendance or punctuality

School Procedure:

We know that 'small absences make big gaps.' As a school, we have a responsibility to act swiftly to support families where it is needed so we take a helpful and firm approach to dealing with attendance. All families are provided with a clear overview of our tiered system to ensure positive attendance.

- 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
- If the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, this is coded as 'O' unauthorised
- On the second day of absence, when there has been no contact from the parent / carer, a possible home visit takes place. Staff conducting this must follow the school's protocol for home visits
- The Attendance Leads continually monitor the attendance of all pupils and in the first instance telephone the parents / carers of children who have missed 10 sessions (unless there is a known reason for the absence, e.g. hospitalisation, authorised leave of absence, medical, etc). This telephone call is followed up with a warning letter. If 4 or more of these 10 sessions are unauthorised, parents / carers will receive an 'Early Intervention' Letter (issued in partnership with the Local Authority)
- If there is no significant improvement in the two weeks following the telephone call and warning letter, parents / carers will be required to attend a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). During this meeting, 'bespoke support' will be offered, and medical evidence will be required for future absences to be authorised

- If there is no significant improvement in the two weeks following the meeting with a member of the SLT), parents / carers will be required to attend a meeting with the Headteacher or Safeguarding Leader
- If there have been 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 school weeks, parents / carers will receive a 'Notice to Improve' Letter (issued in partnership with the Local Authority)
- If there are any further unauthorised absences in the six weeks following the 'Notice to Improve' letter, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority for 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: Attending any other approved educational activity

C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance, or undertaking regulated employment abroad

C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school aged pupil subject to a part-time timetable

D: Dual registered at another school

E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

G: Holiday not granted by the school

I Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another Educational Institution

K: Attending Education Provision arranged by the Local Authority

L: Late arrival before the register is closed

M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

N: Reason for absence not yet established

O: Absence in other or unknown circumstances

P: Participating in a sporting activity

Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

R: Religious observation

S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

U: Arrived in school after registration has closed

V: Attending an educational visit or trip

W: Attending work experience

X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption

Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

#: Planned whole school 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 Council's 'Access to Education Officer'
- Participation at a sporting / musical / other event that has been agreed in advance with the Headteacher

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 – the above 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 where term time absence may be authorised:

- 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. There may also be weekly prizes given to the winning class/es as part of this celebratory assembly. Our approach to rewarding positive attendance is continually reviewed by a school 'attendance team' which meet regularly. The 'attendance team' consists of the Headteacher, Safeguarding Leader, Office Manager, Family Worker, and other school leaders who are invited. Our class rewards encourage 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 reward. 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 the class reward (see section above). The list of choices for termly class awards is voted for each year by the School Council.

Date: May 2026

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