

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absence. This is because children missing out on lessons leaves children / young people vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools. The school follows the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments from 1st September 2013 and 1st September 2016.

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have.

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Stretton Handley Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy has been developed in consultation with Governors, Teachers, Education Welfare Services and pupil's Parents and Guardians. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant Curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Statements of expectations;

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What is expected of the pupils:

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- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

What is expected of the Parents;

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence by telephone and a letter of explanation on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn.
- A reason should be offered for any lateness after the start of a session (8.50am in the morning and 1.10pm in the afternoon)
- To work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- To take family holidays / family visits **during school holiday periods** and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused **except in special / exceptional circumstances**. Each request will be considered on it's own merit. If a child is absent for a holiday in term time without permission this will be unauthorized and may result in the issue of a penalty notice. (See below)
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS or the numeracy and literacy sessions.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount.

The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

What is expected of the School:

- To create a school ethos that pupils values individual children and that they want to be part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments from September 2013.
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfill their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

Holidays/Absences in Term Time

Derbyshire County Council have issue to following policy statement to schools in September 2017:-

'In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

From 1st September 2017, if requested, Derbyshire County Council will consider the issue of a penalty notice for any period of holiday absence which has not been authorised by the Headteacher regardless of a child's wider school attendance.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Recording

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at 8.50am. Any child arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance. At 9.15am the register closes and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as 'late after close of register', which is an unauthorised absence.

All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations. The register officially closes at **9.15am** and any pupil arriving after this will be marked absent for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

During the morning the absences from that morning and the previous afternoon will be recorded onto the electronic registration system and all the present pupils marked present. The offered reasons for any lates from the previous day or any absences will be assessed and the appropriate code entered into the system. The register is returned back to the class teacher before the start of the afternoon session and the register is again taken at 1.10 pm.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone but **must** be followed by a letter on the child's return to school. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence.

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause

- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted **by the school** for exceptional circumstances, not by the parent, and would normally relate to no more than 10 school days in any 1 year. Holidays taken during in term time will be unauthorized.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and after a three week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

	1st Day of Absence	2 Days after period of absence	1 week after period of absence	2 week after period of absence	3 weeks after period of absence
Parent	Contacts school with reason by phone and/or letter . .	Parent provides a letter stating reason for absence	Parent returns slip from letter with reason	Parent returns slip from letter with reason	Parent contacts Head Teacher with a reason
School	School may phone parent to inform them that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why. (Mrs Fox)	School sends an informal letter via the child requesting a reason for absence. (Mrs Fox)	School sends a more formal request via the child requesting a reason for absence. (Mrs Fox)	The Head Teacher contacts the parent with a formal letter informing them that the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised. (Headteacher)	The register is marked as an unauthorised absence if no response from parent. (Class Teacher/Mrs Fox)

Attendance codes

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (Not dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Present	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session

F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (not medical/dental etc appoints)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Present	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late(after register closes)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Not included in attendance calculation
#	School closed to pupils	Attendance not required	Out for whole session

Monitoring

The senior management team and the EWO will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as cause for concern or with less than 85% attendance on a more regular basis. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending (Mrs Fox). The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if, after a two week period there appears to be no improvement the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending (Headteacher). If the parent/s does/do not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral to the AWO will be made (Headteacher/Mrs Fox).

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues. The AWO will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

Requests for leave of absence

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are can obtain a form from the office. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays/ family visits.

Official Register

A copy of the electronic register will be printed monthly providing a paper version of the electronically stored information for the previous term. The register will also have an audit trail of changes printed with it to provide a 'history of change' for the registration period printed. The monthly printouts will be kept together to form a year's record and stored for a period of 3 years in a secure location.

Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

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- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.
- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.

Figures for Attendance/ Absence / Lates will be included on the Headteacher report to Governors.