

Attendance Policy

Aims and Expectations:

Stratford St Mary Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / 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 attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the committee know of the policy and have access to it.

School's roles and responsibilities:

All staff (teaching and support) at Stratford St Mary Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils / students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staffs also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The Headteacher will manage, direct and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. Staff, pupils and parents will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance; attendance will be reported on termly to the governing body. Attendance issues are identified at an early stage and support will be put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Registration:

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

The register will be called promptly by **9 am** and **1.15pm, 1.30pm** (KS1 and KS2 respectively) by each form teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers will close at **9.10 am** and **1.25pm, 1.40pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as absent. Pupils who arrive before the register closes (but after 9 am or

1.15pm, 1.30pm) will be counted as **present but late** and will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

Register Codes:

| Code | Description | Meaning |
|------|--|-----------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |

Status: Approved
 Approved date: Jan 2016
 Approved by: HT
 Next review date: Jan 2018

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| X | Non-compulsory | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence **unless** leave has been granted by the school **in advance** or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher.

Stratford St Mary Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a child's education. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Stratford St Mary Primary School will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 1 week**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances providing an explanation is received:

- Illness
- Dental/medical appointments (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional special occasions e.g. a family wedding
- Family holiday where prior approval has been sought (and given) by the headteacher
- The pupil is not within walking distance and no suitable travel arrangements have been made by the LA
- Attendance at a pupil referral unit (PRU)
- Participation in an approved public performance for which a licence application has been made and the application approved by the LA.

- The pupil's parents are Travellers and the pupil is engaged in the parents' work.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, eg a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance:

First-day calling:

Stratford St Mary Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will phone each day of absence until contact is made.

Meetings with parents:

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

Lateness and punctuality:

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3 (iii)) will be marked absent for the whole

session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be encouraged to alter their practice.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. It is important that all pupils arriving late following this procedure.

For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the school office.

Post-registration truancy:

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Stratford St Mary Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

Term-time Holidays:

It is expected that pupil/student absence such as: holidays; days out with relatives and family treats will be organised during the 13 weeks school closure period. The Headteacher is unable to authorise an absence if the circumstances are not "very exceptional" as defined by Suffolk Local

With this in mind please note:

- The maximum holiday period a Headteacher is able to authorise in any one academic year is 5 working days. The authorisation of holidays during term time is not an entitlement and will only be given at the Headteacher's discretion in exceptional circumstances.
- Every application will be considered by the Headteacher on its merits. Any absences without authorisation by the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised.

Implementation of Penalty Notices to tackle non-school attendance:

As of 1st September 2014, the Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will issue fixed penalty notices (£60 per pupil per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 per pupil per parent if paid within 28 days).

The Local Authority states that the issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate:

- Where a pupil/student has taken holiday during term school and the absence is not authorised by
- Where a pupil/student is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- Where a pupil/student has been identified for the first time as having 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the current school term.

Further information on Penalty Notices can be obtained from the Suffolk County Council website.

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time. The policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday
- availability of the desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- overlap with beginning or end of term

Stratford St Mary Primary School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS, Y1 Phonics tests.

Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Stratford St Mary Primary School.

Stratford St Mary Primary School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly.
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum.
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Stratford St Mary Primary School on the first day of absence.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day.
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities.

- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Stratford St Mary Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns

Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to the Headteacher.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

Governors' responsibilities

The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.