



Attendance Policy

Rationale

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Stubbings Infant School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

This policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to the families of all children who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although families have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of families and children of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with children, families, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all children realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially Class Teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Families do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by Families will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Broad Guidelines

We will maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, families and children.
- Ensuring that families have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with families, children, staff and governors on school attendance matters. Developing and implementing

procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.

- Supporting children who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance. Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

We will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, families and children.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if families have not communicated with the school.
- To inform families what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with families to improve individual children attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where families have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Calderdale LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headship Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their Families/ carers
- Informing the Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emplacing with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Headteacher is responsible for:

- Monitoring of overall school attendance
- Identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues

- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the Education Welfare Service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Education Welfare Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Collating and record registration and attendance information ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software.
- Taking and record messages from Families regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting families of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their families
- Discussing all attendance concerns with the Headteacher
- Taking appropriate action following these meetings such as sending letters to families or arranging meetings between the Head and families to discuss attendance concerns.

Families are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

In Foundation the doors are open from 8:50 and remain open until 9:05.

In KS1 the bell rings and school opens at 9:00 am. The doors remain open until 9: 05 am. This time is sufficient for all children to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.10am. Attendance code / (for children who are present) these registers are then returned to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9:05am the only way to get into school is via the main entrance. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9:05am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those children who are late, this is documented on the register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives after 9:10am may be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness families will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for families to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Families should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When families notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from families with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to families to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff checks all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those children who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact families to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to families to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Families Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon families to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance families are always informed of our concerns.

Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with families via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for families to discuss reasons for absence

and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service will issue penalty notices to families where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Education Welfare Officer visits once a half term to check and monitor attendance. She carries out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 85%). She works with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

Conclusion

At Stubbings we believe that if children are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is vital. All children have an entitlement to regular school attendance. It is the responsibility of the families and the school to encourage good patterns of attendance and punctuality. We know that children with excellent attendance and punctuality achieve better results and benefit more successfully from their education.

Date written/ amended: June 2016

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