



Stonebow Primary School

Policy name - Attendance

Date: Nov 2021

If applicable:

Date approved by governors –

Signed -

Review Date – Nov 2023

Date and summary of any updates:

Nov 2021

Registration at Stonebow Primary School is as follows:

The two entrance gates open at 8:40am and children line up on the playground, escorted in by a member of staff (except EYFS who will be greeted at the door). Years 1 and 2 via Stonebow Close, EYFS and KS2 via Maxwell Drive. The gates close at 8.55am.

Morning registration is between 8:45 and 8:55am

Afternoon registration is between 1:10 and 1:15pm

1 Introduction

We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will reward those pupils whose attendance is very good through half termly attendance certificates. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. Pupils who attend school on a regular basis can take advantage of the full array of educational opportunities available to them and make maximum progress. Research shows that those pupils who have irregular attendance are at risk of not achieving their full potential.

At Stonebow, regular attendance is expected to be attendance of 97% or above.

It is a parents' responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and provide the school with current contact details including a home or mobile telephone number

School Responsibility - THE LAW and School Attendance

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept.
- Our school governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.
- The Headteacher and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.
- Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.
- Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

2 Registration

Registration at Stonebow Primary School is as follows:

The two entrance gates open at 8:40am and children line up on the playground, escorted in by a member of staff (except EYFS who will be greeted at the door). Years 1 and 2 via Stonebow Close, EYFS and KS2 via Maxwell Drive. The gates close at 8.55am.

Morning registration is between 8:45 and 8:55am

Afternoon registration is between 1:10 and 1:15pm

Pupils who do not register within these times will be marked as 'late' – coded 'L'

Once the register closes any child who attends school after that time will be coded as a 'U' which equates to an unauthorised absence.

3 Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either

AUTHORISED or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably by telephone or in writing.

Authorised Absence – coded as ‘M’ – medical or hospital appointment, ‘I’ - illness, ‘C’ - other authorised circumstances, ‘T’ - traveller absence, ‘B’ - educated off site, ‘R’ - religious observance. An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Parents do not authorise any absences and only the school can decide to authorise absences. An example where a school will not authorise an absence is when a parent takes a pupil out of school to go shopping during school hours.

The school will code an absence as authorised if the parents/carers provide an acceptable reason to justify their child’s absence. **School will expect parents to provide evidence that medical advice has been sought for any absences exceeding 3 days.**

The school may make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer, Naina Zavery (**see appendix 1**), if a pupil has an increasing number of authorised or unauthorised absences as this is classed as ‘persistent absence’ (attendance 90% or lower). Contact will be made with the parents regarding the absences.

The school may also make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer if there is a concern about a pupil’s welfare or safety. Parents will be contacted to ascertain if further action needs to be taken.

Parents are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

Unauthorised Absence – coded as ‘O’ - unauthorised or ‘G’ - family holiday not agreed.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

All absences are coded as unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent. Examples of this are:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Parents keeping pupils off school because they themselves or the child’s siblings are ill
- Family holidays or leave of absence that has not been agreed

4 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent/carers of any pupil who has unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to a meeting at the school to discuss the problem.

If the pupil continues to accrue unauthorised absences the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, Naina Zavery, who will make contact with the parents to arrange a meeting and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

Where required, legal action will be sought and the EWO will submit the case before the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice and /or prosecution. The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states: ‘If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence’. The school reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail in their responsibility to send their children to school on a regular basis.

5 If a pupil is absent

Parents and carers should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence either by telephone on 01509 646217 or leave a message, clearly stating the reason for the absence and the expected duration of illness.

When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which will inform the school office. If the office has not already been informed of the reason for a pupil's absence, they will endeavour to contact a parent or carer by telephone or text message. When the pupil returns to school, parents or carers must ensure that a note or verbal confirmation is provided to explain the reason for the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. Parents are encouraged to provide the appointment card/letter.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office.

As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence, to check on the safety of the pupil. Where the school has concerns about a pupil's safety our EWO will be contacted and a 'Safe and Well' check will be carried out.

6 Requests for leave of absence

We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child, e.g. a family crisis. We expect parents and carers to contact the school and request the leave of absence on the official school form. The Headteacher will respond to the request as soon as possible.

7 Holidays in term time

Government guidelines, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, prevent Head teachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term-time does not fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' and the school is therefore unable to grant leave of absence for any family holiday.

If requesting a family holiday, Parents must complete a 'leave of absence' form, outlining the reason and the specific dates when leave is required. The Head will consider the request and inform the Parents of the decision in writing.

Holidays taken without permission will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' – family holiday not agreed ('G' code). Where a pupil's attendance is deemed 'low' and not 'regular' as a result of the absence, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer who may submit the case before the Local Authority to issue parents with a penalty notice and subsequent fine. Governors are sympathetic to the financial pressures on many families but feel that a pupil's education should be the priority at all times.

8 Issuing a fine

The parent(s) of any pupil who has a number of absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday, will each be fined £60, which must be paid within a 21 day period. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £120, which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, Parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

Parents can seek further clarification from EWSM on 07947994289 or email naina.zavery@ews-m.com

9 Long-term absence

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. This work must be completed and returned to school so that the school can monitor the pupil's progress.

Where it is deemed that a pupil is unable to return to school due to chronic medical or other medical reasons the school will make a referral to Naina Zavery to ascertain if any alternative provision for education can be requested. Parents will have to provide medical evidence that clearly states a pupil is unable to return to mainstream education.

Parents must provide the school with medical evidence when their child is going to be off from school for a long period, but alternative provision is **not** being sought. The school may refer this for further investigation to Naina Zavery, who will make contact with the parent/s.

10 Persistent Absence

Any student whose attendance falls below 90%, will be classed as a Persistently Absent student. The table below shows the cumulative absence thresholds for 10% absence:

Term	90% attendance or below
Aut 1 st	7+ sessions (3.5 days absence)
Aut 2 nd	14+ sessions (7 days absence)
Spr 1 st	20+ sessions (10 days absence)
Spr 2 nd	25+ sessions (12.5 days absence)
Sum 1 st	31+ sessions (15.5 days absence)
Sum 2 nd	38+ sessions (19 days absence)

Therefore, if a student misses 19 or more days over an academic year, they will be classed as 'Persistently Absent'.

The DfE state: ***"If over 5 academic years, a pupil has attendance of 90%, that pupil will miss a half of a school year - that's a lot of lost education. As parents play an essential role in supporting attendance, the changes to persistent absence need to be shared with them"***

Pupils taking unauthorised leave of absence early in the year (for example, a holiday in term time) could be categorised as 'persistently absent' well into the fifth half term of the academic year, **even with excellent attendance from their return date onwards.**

11 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive punctually, in time for registration. The school gate is locked from 8.55am and any pupils arriving after this time must enter school through the main entrance and be 'signed in' by a parent/carer.

Pupils arriving after registers close will be marked as 'L' – late, on the class register.

Any pupil who arrives at school after 9:15am without an adequate explanation, will be coded as 'U'. This equates to an unauthorised mark. Parents may be requested to meet with the EWO if this becomes a regular problem. Legal action can be taken when a child has a succession of 'U' codes.

Where possible, parents must ensure that they try and book all medical appointments either before school starts or after school finishes. It is useful for parents to provide the school with the appointment card and/or letter for any medical or hospital appointment. These absences will be coded 'M' if a pupil arrives late or leaves early to attend an appointment.

Parents/Carers of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the Headteacher and will be asked to address the problem. School may make a referral to Naina Zavery who will arrange to meet with the parent(s).

12 Rewards for good attendance

All the pupils who have excellent attendance in any half term will receive a certificate. There are

also special certificates for outstanding attendance (100%) for the whole school year. These are presented in our achievement assembly at the end of term.

The class with the highest weekly attendance will be awarded the 'Attendance Cup' in assembly and retain the cup for one week.

13 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The Headteacher will monitor attendance regularly to identify any pupils who are persistently absent or who continually arrive late. Parents will be informed by letter when their child's attendance is deemed 'low' and will be expected to address this, otherwise the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a pupil's absence, they will contact the school office immediately.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The rates of attendance will be inspected by OFSTED who will make a judgement about the school's attendance in their inspection report.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Appendix 1

Meet our Education Welfare Officer

My name is Naina Zavery and I am a qualified senior Education Welfare Officer and I work for Education Welfare Services Midlands (EWSM). I will be working very closely with Stonebow Primary School on all matters related to Attendance, Punctuality and any Welfare issues.

I am very keen to work closely with parents in ensuring that their child attends school on time and on a regular basis EWSM work very closely with a number of agencies including the Local Authority, Youth Service, Local GP surgeries, CAMHS, Social Care and various other organisations.

I would ask that in the first instance parents should be contacting the school, to discuss any concerns they have but please do feel free to give me a call or email if you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the above matters

Please do take a look at the website for further details www.educationwelfareservicesmidlands.com

Tel 07947992289 or email naina.zavery@ews-m.com

Naina Zavery

Senior Education Welfare Officer