



STEDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents parent(s) or the carer with whom the child resides. Parents have a legal duty to make sure their children attend school regularly and that they arrive at school on time (ready for a 9.00am start in class). It is the parent's responsibility to tell the school as soon as possible why a pupil is absent and to provide any further information that the school needs to confirm that absence if appropriate.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children 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 do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

REGISTERS and ABSENCE

The class teacher will record attendance of the child at the start of the morning and the afternoon sessions. Once the registers have been checked, and if no communication has been received, the school will endeavour to contact the parent/carers of any absent child to ascertain that they are safe. If contact cannot be made by 12 noon with the parent concerning their child's absence, and there is concern for the safety of the child, then the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team and /or MASH may be contacted.

Telephone messages will be accepted as notification of absence and a written summary of the message will be kept on the register.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

At Stedham Primary School we closely monitor short term sickness absence. If we have concerns over the amount of sickness absence and/or it becomes clear that a pattern is emerging, we will ask to meet with parents to discuss further, in order that we can identify how the situation can be resolved and attendance improved. We ask that parents ensure their child returns to school as soon as possible after an episode of illness. **After a bout of sickness and / or diarrhoea, children may not return to school until 48 hours after the last episode.**

UNAUTHORISED LATENESS

The school day begins at 9am and anyone arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.10am will be recorded as late. The register at Stedham Primary closes at 9.10am. Arrival at school after that will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Once a child reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week school period (each session is a morning or an afternoon session) a referral will be made to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

If a child is absent from school without authorisation for 10 or more school sessions (half days) in a 10 school week period (accrued or consecutive) a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made.

Disputes with the school or claims of bullying are not permitted reasons for absence; absences due to these reasons will be unauthorised.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 set out that holidays in term time cannot be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. Following consultations with the Governing Body and other Rother Valley schools, it is the decision of Stedham Primary that the Head Teacher **will not authorise holiday in term time and if 10 or more school sessions are missed as a result of unauthorised holiday, a referral will be made to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.**

The definition of holiday for the purpose of this policy is any absence of half a day or more that the child is away from school for any reason other than those which are deemed as acceptable (see Leave of Absence below). This includes not only going away for an extended period of time but also day excursions e.g. to theme parks and half day absences for reasons such as getting a head start on traffic before a weekend away.

If a parent chooses to disregard school policy and takes holiday in term time, there will be no warning given and a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the PE:I Team for their consideration once the absences meet or exceed 10 sessions.

Although we do not authorise holiday, Stedham Primary School has a legal obligation to safeguard its pupils and should know where they are during each school day. If a parent chooses to take unauthorised holiday, we would appreciate them notifying us of this intention so we do not need to initiate safeguarding procedures which will involve the PE:I Team and possibly other authorities.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

It is at the discretion of the Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence in specific circumstances following completion of a leave of absence form;

- Off-site Educational Activities e.g. Gifted and Talented Days run at other schools
- Participation in approved and supervised sporting activities
- Medical or dental appointments, **although parents are encouraged to make routine appointments out of school hours wherever possible**
- Religious Observance for days set apart for that purpose by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

In circumstances where the absence is unforeseen such as emergency medical or dental appointments, written or verbal communication with the school will suffice.

Leave of Absence can also be granted by the Head Teacher in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances include compassionate leave in situations such as bereavement and serious illness. **Leave of this kind should be discussed directly with the Head Teacher** before completion of a leave of absence form. Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the nature of the request, the frequency of requests, if advance notice was given (when appropriate), pupil attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. Leave of absence forms can be obtained from the school office. The Head Teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be authorised absent from school if leave is granted in exceptional circumstances.

REWARDS

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured which leads to significantly improved educational outcomes over time.

Individual incentives.

Where positive impact is required for specific children, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance. Individual rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular need.

APPENDIX

1. Attendance expectations

Attendance is mandatory for all pupils. This means the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures in the main body of this policy.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

2. Reluctance to return to school

The school will remind parents of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school, and parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.

If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

3. Monitoring attendance

The attendance officer will monitor the school's attendance rates once the school is open to all pupils in September. Any trends in non-attendance will be identified (e.g. due to anxiety) and measures will be put in place to reengage affected pupils with the school.

The school will place particular emphasis on supporting the attendance and re-engagement of vulnerable pupils, pupils at risk of PA, and pupils who have not engaged regularly with school during the coronavirus pandemic.

An agreed member of the SLT will complete the '[Educational setting status form](#)' on a daily basis, based on the information on the attendance register.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Stedham Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and attendance officer detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and pupils record their attendance in their planners. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 95 percent, the attendance officer speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The attendance officer also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 95 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 95 percent.
10. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

Reviewed: October 2022

Next review: October 2023

Appendix

Leave of Absence Form

STEDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Request for Leave of Absence in Term Time

Please use this request for leave of absence form in conjunction with the Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy, a copy of which can be seen on request.

NB It is at the discretion of the Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence in specific circumstances, for those activities not organised or arranged by the school;

- Off-site Educational Activities
- Participation in approved and supervised sporting activities
- Medical or dental appointments, although parents are encouraged to make routine appointments out of school hours wherever possible
- Religious Observance for days set apart for that purpose by the religious body to which the parent belongs

Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances. These circumstances include compassionate leave in situations such as bereavement and serious illness. Leave of this kind should be discussed directly with the Head Teacher. Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the nature of the request, the frequency of requests, if advance notice was given (when appropriate), pupil attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

To The Head Teacher of Stedham Primary School

Authorised leave of absence is requested for:

Name of child(ren).....

Class(es).....

Dates: from to.....

Reasons for seeking leave of absence during term time:

Signed (parent/guardian).....

Date.....

To..... (parent/guardian)

Your request for leave of absence as set out above is duly authorised.

Your request for leave of absence is not approved as it does not fulfil the criteria set out in our Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

Signed (Head Teacher).....

Date.....