

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England VC Primary School

Life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

Attendance Policy #7

The *Attendance Policy* was reviewed during the Summer of 2021.

This document is the result of that review.

The school is aware of the challenges resulting from the 'Covid-19 Lockdowns' and the subsequent consequences of Covid-19 for individuals, families and institutions.

Some school cultures, norms and routines were disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) and some pupils have been exposed to a range of adverse experiences. Our staff work to support all children with sensitivity and understanding in order to achieve the best possible school attendance.

With effect from 22nd March 2020 Wiltshire Council will **not** issue penalty Notices for unauthorised absences **directly related** to the Covid-19 pandemic until such time as the DfE deems appropriate.

DATE AGREED BY FULL GOVERNING BODY:	27/09/21
REVIEW DATE:	September 2022
AUTHOR:	Mrs Kay Bridson
HEADTEACHER:	Mrs Kay Bridson
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:	Miss Angela Britten
SIGNED:	
TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:	<i>Admissions Policy.</i> <i>Aims of the School</i> <i>Behaviour for Life and Learning Policy</i> <i>Home School Agreement</i> <i>Wiltshire Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct</i>

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England VC Primary School

Attendance Policy #7

Life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to fulfil the aims of the school through a consistent approach to attendance issues.

Statement of Aims:

We aim:

- to ensure that all our pupils make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning
- to ensure that everyone within the school community understands the issues and procedures for attendance
- to fulfil our statutory duties in relation to school attendance
- to encourage, recognise and reward good attendance
- to raise parental awareness of unauthorised absence
- to improve overall attendance rates.

Implementation:

The Governing Body and the Headteacher have overall responsibility for the implementation of this Attendance Policy.

Attendance is regarded as a whole school issue.

Statement of Principles:

We regard *attendance* as being an important issue. The importance we attach to *attendance* reflects our view, that education is crucial to the development of every child.

We believe that *attendance* is important because of the link between *regular attendance* and raising attainment.

We believe that *regular attendance* is necessary, so that all pupils may reap the full benefits of a broad and balanced curriculum, extra-curricula activities and feel part of our school community.

We believe *regular attendance* is necessary if we are to ensure equal opportunities and equal access for all our pupils.

We recognise that while parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly, we also have an important role to play and believe in a partnership approach to the issue.

Expectations:

We are committed to helping our pupils understand that:

- learning is important
- regular attending, being punctual and arriving in a state of readiness for learning is valued
- they are missed, when they are not here
- hard work, commitment and perseverance is rewarded
- problems leading to non-attendance are taken seriously- we listen
- excellent attendance and punctuality is something to which to aspire.

Attendance-roles and responsibilities:

The legal framework.

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must ensure that their children are educated. For most parents this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in prosecution.

Authorised absence includes late arrivals, illness, interviews, sporting activities, examinations, family funerals and family holidays all of which should be supported (where possible) by a written explanation for the absence.

Authorised absence, for the purpose of a family holiday can only be granted up to a maximum of ten school days in any school year. Schools cannot legally authorise more than ten school days in a school year unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Government has issued clear guidelines with regard to family holidays during term time. Parents are made aware via the School Prospectus and regular newsletters of the following:

- a maximum of ten school days authorised absence for the purpose of a family holiday may be granted in any school year.
- parents do not have the automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday during term time and should not normally do so
- parents need to request permission in advance from the school if they wish to take their child on any holiday during term time
- each request for a holiday absence is considered individually by the school
- if the school does not agree to an absence and the child is still withdrawn for a holiday the absence is recorded as unauthorised on the child's record
- an "Authorised Absence Request Form" is available from the school office should parents wish to take a family holiday during term time. It should be completed prior to any withdrawal of a child during term time- (See appendix).

By law schools are required:

- to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon
- to report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than two weeks- unauthorised
- to show in the register whether a pupil absence is authorised or unauthorised
- to support and promote good attendance and take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

The role of the Local Authority

The 1996 Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at that school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

The Local Authority can prosecute parents/carers in a magistrate's court. This could result in a fine of up to a maximum of £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months for each child who is not going to school.

Alternatively, Education Welfare Officers, Police Officers and Headteachers have the authority to issue penalty notices to parents. Failure to pay a properly issued penalty notice will result in prosecution as above.

Certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a **Penalty Notice**.

A Penalty Notice will only be issued to a parent/carer if the pupil has at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence recorded within the previous six months.

In most circumstances, you should first receive a formal warning letter informing you that unless there is an improvement in your child's attendance, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

The Education Welfare Service receives requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools/colleges in Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Constabulary and neighbouring Local Authorities. These will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine of currently £60.00 (if paid within 21 days) or £120.00 (if paid within 28 days).

Penalty Notices may be issued to both parents for each child.

The role of parents

We believe parents have a crucial role to play in ensuring that their child maintains good attendance. **A child will infer how much a parent values education from their attitude to attendance issues.**

Parents invest in their child's future by:

- ensuring that their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and in a "condition to learn" (i.e. not too tired or too hungry)
- working in partnership with us to help their child gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- working in partnership with us by taking an active interest in their child's education
- working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which have a negative impact on their child's attendance.

The role of staff in school.

We recognise our important role to play in ensuring that expectations regarding *attendance issues* are consistent and that the school's legal responsibilities are fulfilled. **Pupils and parents will infer how much the school values education by our handling of attendance issues.**

Staff invest in their pupils' futures by:

- following precise registration procedures
- maintaining accurate records
- monitoring attendance on a daily, weekly and half-termly basis
- liaising effectively with parents, Education Welfare Officers and other agencies
- employing strategies to improve and maintain good attendance.

The role of pupils.

Pupils have a responsibility to make sure that they follow school procedures. Pupils are expected to:

- maintain silence and remain stationary while the register is being called
- answer the register in a polite and clear manner when their name is called (i.e. Yes Miss X)
- apologise to their teacher if they arrive in the classroom late- (by walking over to a teacher and talking to them discretely, not shouting across the classroom! Apologies are accepted and children are not reprimanded when their lateness is beyond their control)
- report to the school office if they arrive after 9:30 a.m.
- give the teacher any absence notes written by their parents

Procedures:

The following procedures are used to identify and follow up all absence.

In-school Procedures

Registration: Class teacher

- morning register open 9:00-9:30
- register completed in BLACK ink to indicate present and RED ink to indicate absence
- register completed according to agreed presentation procedures and codes (see appendix 1)
- number present indicated on board in classroom
- children arriving at school after the bell has gone to report to school office

- registers collected by monitors at 09:30 and 13:30 taken to school office and kept in a secure place.

School Office: Administrative Assistant/Headteacher.

- recording phone calls from parents on first day of absence, by phone- record name, date and reason for absence in book
- phone calls posted on staffroom notice-board
- late-book, in the office recording reasons for late arrivals- i.e. any child arriving after the bell has rung
- phone call to parent of any child who has not arrived at school, if no phone call or note on first day of absence has been received
- record in register, any child arriving after 09:30 when the registration closes
- the Headteacher monitors registers at least every two weeks. Absences, which remain unaccounted for are followed up by a standard letter home (see appendix 2) and reasons for absences, sought.
- pupils whose attendance is poor or who have a pattern of absences, are referred to the Education Welfare Service
- any child truanting after registration-i.e. leaving the school premises during the school day will be reported to their parents.

Home/ In-school Procedures

- first day of absence parent to contact school by phone, in person or in writing giving reasons for and expected length of absence
- parent to follow up initial contact with a written note which gives an explanation for absence.

Strategies:

Strategies for encouraging good attendance are targeted at both pupils and parents. They include:

Pupils.

- praise for bringing attendance notes to school promptly
- pupil involvement on attendance issues through the School's Council
- assemblies
- weekly sticker presented to each pupil for 100% attendance
- termly wrist band awarded for 95% + attendance
- termly certificate for 100% attendance
- annual award for 100% attendees- certificate and book

Parents.

- attendance issues and procedures discussed during Induction of new Reception children
- attendance issues and procedures published in the School Prospectus
- regular newsletters reinforcing procedures and the importance of regular attendance
- their child's attendance rate is published on their Annual School Report
- data and information published in the Governors' Report to Parents.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of procedures and strategies, this policy is monitored on a regular basis. While the Headteacher has an overall view of school attendance issues and patterns, class teachers monitor their registers on a daily basis.

Class teachers:

- report any concerns or emerging patterns to the Headteacher as soon as they become aware of them
- share issues at weekly staff meetings
- monitor absence notes/lack of absence notes- report concerns to Headteacher
- send absence notes to school office to be filed

Headteacher:

- the Headteacher monitors registers at least every two weeks. Absences which remain unaccounted for are followed up by a standard letter home (see appendix 2) and reasons for absences sought
- written feedback is given to staff, following any monitoring exercise undertaken by the Headteacher
- pupils whose attendance is poor or who have a pattern of absences, are referred to the Education Welfare Service
- data is recorded termly, following the monitoring and award of certificates to 100% attendees
- meets regularly with the school's Education Welfare Officer to discuss concerns and if necessary organise meetings with parents
- collates information and data to contribute towards any legal action the LA may wish to bring against a parent
- attendance targets are set annually in the School Development Plan and evaluated and reviewed as part of the Annual School Review
- includes attendance issues as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors

Governing Body:

- monitor attendance data and set targets as part of the school Annual School Review cycle

APPENDIX 1

ATTENDANCE CODES

The following suggested codes for categorisation of presence or absence are taken from “School Attendance and the Role of the Education Welfare Service 1997”.

A detailed explanation of these symbols can be found in “Attendance and the Role of the Education Welfare Service 1997”.

PRESENT

/\: The presence of a pupil who has arrived at school on time should be marked by a black oblique stroke.

The presence of a pupil who has arrived at school late, but while the register remains open should be marked by the symbol L within a red circle.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE (ZERO, TOGETHER WITH APPROPRIATE CODE)

- B** Pupil attending another institution under a formalised dual registration arrangement.
- C** Other circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions, performances, other approved absences not covered by other codes).
- E** Excluded.
- H** Family holiday (for which leave has been granted).
- I** Attending interview, eg: with prospective employer or with another educational establishment.
- M** Medical and dental appointments, confirmed illness.
- R** Day of religious observance for the religious body to which the parents belong.
- S** Approved study leave.
- T** Traveller child travelling.

APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY (CODE LETTER ONLY, NO ZERO)

- P** Approved sporting activity (participation in/attendance at).
- V** Educational visit or trip (UK/overseas).
- W** Approved work experience.
- Z** Pupil attending another institution under link course/consortium/franchising arrangement (but short of a formal dual registration arrangement).

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X

APPENDIX 2

(On headed note paper)

Variables

Dear NAME

I have attached to this letter a registration certificate DATES for your daughter /son NAME. As you can see her/his attendance rate is x%.

(Detail of absence). I would like to warn you that the Education Welfare Service could take action if NAME attendance does not improve by DATE.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or would like some support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Kay Bridson.

