

STANLEY PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

"We believe that every child and adult matters. At Stanley Park Junior School, we work together as staff, parents, carers and governors, in a fun, safe and inclusive environment. We strive to create a rich, varied and challenging curriculum that provides inspirational learning opportunities for all children as they aspire to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens with a sense of pride in themselves and their school"

Policy Shared with staff and parents:	March 2020
Policy agreed by Governing Body:	February 2020
Next review date:	November 2022

Introduction

We believe that good attendance is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the educational and social skills, which will equip them for life. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and Borough Attendance Officer can work in partnership.

Through our policy we aim to establish systems and practices which will:

- a) create an ethos in which good attendance is recognised as the norm
- b) endeavour to monitor continually the quality of the school and classroom experience with a view to maintain a safe secure environment for children and a curriculum that meets their needs in order to positively encourage attendance
- c) raise pupil awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance and encourage in pupils a sense of responsibility
- d) monitor attendance and work to solve any identified problems quickly.
- e) maintain an effective partnership with the Borough Attendance Service
- f) develop mutual co-operation between home and school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing attendance issues
- g) demonstrate through the use of rewards and sanctions that the school recognises that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves
- h) recognise, reinforce and support the key role of the class teacher in promoting and monitoring good attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and progress, as well as their relationships with friendship groups. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

At Stanley Park Junior School we aim for an environment which enables and encourages the pupils of our school to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that parents make sure that their child attends regularly and this policy sets out how we will achieve this together. Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents, helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by all staff.

WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The Governing Body, together with the Headteacher, set an overall yearly attendance target for pupils within the school. By setting a target this gives the whole school a good attendance to aim for.

Government guidance states that a minimum acceptable level of attendance for this school is 95%. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We will keep parents updated regularly about progress to this level and how their child's attendance compares.

Information on attendance projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask parents for their full support.

People responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Administrative Support: Julia McClelland, Tracey Cable and Lisa Sealy

Headteacher: Amanda Lamy

Governors Admissions Committee and Standards Committee

Definitions of Attendance and Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required on the school's absence line or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like, illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'permission' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school and the Local Authority using sanctions i.e penalty notices and/or legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed and late not within a reasonable time i.e. after 9.30am
- Shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays taken in term time which have not been authorised as exceptional circumstances.
- Parents or siblings feeling unwell

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child.

If a child is reluctant to attend, it is important that parents don't cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. Instead parents should contact the school to discuss the matter.

To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of an absence, the school may request additional information or evidence.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes 'a persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' 'fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold **or** is at risk of moving towards it is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, combined with academic/learning mentoring where absence affects attainment and progress.

All PA pupils are routinely made known to the School Attendance Officer. Meetings with the parents, formal letters and/or a formal referral can be made to support improved attendance.

Promoting and Supporting Good Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, pupils, and all members of school staff,

To help us all to focus on this we will:

Give parents details on attendance in our regular newsletter

Report to parents each term on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is, and how this relates to their achievements;

We celebrate good attendance through the presentation of certificates for 100% attendance.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent, parents must:

- Contact us as soon as possible (by 9.30am) on the first day of absence by telephone call or e-mail. This message will then be recorded on SIMS.

If a child is absent and we have not heard from the parent, the school will telephone the parent on the first day of absence after 10am. If no response, 2nd and 3rd contact will be contacted. This must be recorded on the absence register/SIMS.

If a child has poor attendance, a home visit may be undertaken by members of school staff or the attendance officer.

If a child's attendance is already poor, medical evidence may be asked for before an absence is recorded as illness.

If a child's attendance is below 90% and is unauthorised for ten days or more then a formal referral to the Borough School Attendance Officer will be made.

Lateness Procedures:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If children miss the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, and can be embarrassing for the child, and this in turn, can also encourage absence.

The bell will go outside at 8:45a.m. to enable an early and orderly entrance into school. The school day starts at 8:55 a.m. Children are expected to be in their classroom by this time.

Registers are marked by 9:00a.m. and children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time.

If children have a persistent late record, parents will be sent a letter and asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer in order to resolve the problem. However, parents can approach the school for support and advice at any time, if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Leave of Absence taken in term time.

Changes to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force in September 2013 which removed reference to Headteachers' discretion to authorise family holidays of up to 10 days as well as the reference to extended leave. The amendments make clear that **Headteachers may not grant any leave** of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** when the Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If leave of absence is requested due to exceptional circumstances each request will be considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher. If there are deemed to be exceptional circumstances and leave of absence is granted, a return date will be agreed by the Headteacher. Parents should be aware that failure to return by the agreed date may mean that their child's school place is at risk.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents / Guardians

- Making sure that children attend regularly and punctually unless prevented by illness or medical appointment
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence to let the school know why the child is away, and sending a letter in confirming the reason for absence on the day of their return
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about a child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Children

- Should have a sensible bed-time that ensures time for breakfast and organising themselves before setting off to school.
- Show a sense of pride in arriving on time and well prepared for learning.
- Try to arrive in time to line up at 8:45a.m. to ensure a settled start to the day.
- Follow school and class routines to ensure a happy and positive start to the day.

- Children who arrive late for school (9:00 a.m.) should report to Reception and sign the late book.

Class Teachers

Registers are legal documents and should be completed with care. They are to be completed in the morning by 9am and afternoon at 1.15pm. The school will ensure that staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

Class teachers should ;

- Ensure that registers are completed accurately at the beginning of each session
- Ensure that Absence letters are sent home and returned inside the register when returned.
- Inform parents of attendance and punctuality at least once a term through parents evening and reports.
- Follow up concerns over poor attendance with parents and encourage good attendance with the children.
- Monitoring the attendance and patterns of absence of the children in their class and alert a concern with the Headteacher.
- Ensuring (in conjunction with their colleagues) that the ethos in the class and the school is supportive to good attendance
- Ensuring that the delivery of the curriculum is challenging, interesting and stimulating so that children are motivated to attend regularly

Reception Staff

Reception staff will support the process by:

- Preparing Attendance Registers for classes each week
- Entering registers on the school Computer system
- Checking registers have been completed accurately.
- Dealing with weekly absence reports and filing of absence letters and chasing parents for absence notes
- Managing the Signing in /out Late book and taking messages relating to absences from parents
- Contacting the parent on the **first** day of absence, if no note or message has been received **by 10am,**
- **Make referrals to Borough attendance officer after liaison with headteacher**

Headteacher

The Headteacher will meet all legal requirements and support the process by :

- Reporting on attendance each term, to set targets on attendance and complete statutory returns to the DFE
- Communicating information relating to attendance issues to parents
- Working with the Attendance Admin Lead, Governors and the Borough Attendance Officer to monitor attendance and promote improved attendance.
- Following up concerns over poor attendance with children, parents and the Borough Attendance Officer.
- Supporting staff in monitoring and dealing with problems

- Supporting families and individual children where attendance is creating difficulties
- To ensure that Termly Reports for pupils detail information on Attendance and Punctuality
- To arrange for the issue of Certificates to pupils achieving 100% attendance
- responding to requests for term-time holidays

PENALTY NOTICES (Local Authority advice for parents and carers)

WHAT IS A PENALTY NOTICE?

Under existing legislation, parents and carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot, or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court, but which seeks to secure improvement in a pupil's attendance. Full payment of the Penalty Notice discharges parents and carers of any further liability for the period stated on the Notice.

WHEN ARE THEY ISSUED?

The London Borough of Sutton considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be issued in a range of situations, such as: • Your child has unauthorised absences from school • Your child is persistently late at school after the registers have closed • Taking unauthorised leave of absence in term time

WHO ARE THEY ISSUED TO?

A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent in respect of each child not attending school. 'Parents' in Education law relates to a parent or carer of the child(ren).

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, increasing to £120 if paid after this date, but within 28 days.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Pupils at risk of harm/neglect - Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow child protection procedures. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved.

If a child does not turn up for school for 10 days, school staff will make the following reasonable steps to find out where they are:

(All contacts and outcomes to be recorded MyConcern)

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family Where a pupil has unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an referral to Sutton First Contact Service.

MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

The admission committee and standards committee of the governing board will monitor the implementation of this policy. This will include regular meetings with the Headteacher and a termly report to Governors. OTHER POLICIES THAT SHOULD BE READ

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019
- Children Missing Education Dfe Guidance
- Admissions Policy