

# 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:	December 2022
Policy agreed by Governing Body:	December 2022
Next review date:	December 2024

## **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 and parent/carer 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.

## **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.

## **LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing in Education Dfe Guidance

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

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

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **Headteacher/ Attendance Lead**

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
- Benchmark school attendance to others Nationally

- Communicating information relating to attendance issues to parents
- Working with the Attendance Admin Lead, Governors and the Attendance Officer to monitor attendance and promote improved attendance.
- Following up concerns over poor attendance with children, parents and the School Attendance Officer and arrange meetings as necessary
- Supporting staff in monitoring and dealing with attendance issues of pupils
- Supporting families and individual children where attendance is creating difficulties
- Responding to requests for term-time leave of absence
- Implement any attendance interventions and monitor the impact of these
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when a fixed penalty notice is triggered

**The attendance officer is a member of the admin team and can be contacted via telephone on 02086477497**

### **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 if put in the registers
- Inform parents of attendance concerns 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

- Take calls/respond to emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on SIMS
- Managing the Signing in /out Late book
- Contacting the parent on the first day of absence, if no note or message has been received by 10am.
- **Make referrals to school attendance officer after liaison with headteacher**

### **Parents / Carers**

- Making sure that children attend regularly and punctually unless prevented by illness or medical appointment
- Contacting the school office by 9am on the day of absence, and each subsequent day of absence unless a fixed number of days has been advised by the GP, to let the school know why the child is away.
- 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.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If appointments are within school time, parents must provide proof.

### **Children**

- Attend school every day and show a sense of pride in arriving on time and well prepared for learning.
- Should have a sensible bed-time routine that ensures time for breakfast and organising themselves before setting off to school.
- Follow school and class routines to ensure a happy and positive start to the day.
- Children who arrive late for school should report to Reception and sign the late book giving a reason for the lateness.

## **RECORDING ATTENDANCE**

### **Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by the following times:

Year 3 and 4: 8.40am

Year 5 and 6: 8.45am

The register for the first session will be taken at:

Year 3 and 4: 8.45am and the register will close at 8.50am

Year 5 and 6: 8.50am and the register will close at 8.55am

The register for the afternoon (second session) will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

### **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.

Registers are marked at the times above and children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the close of register.

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.

### **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.

At SPJS our target is 97%. Throughout 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.

### **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.

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. The school may code the absence as unauthorised for illness if there is a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness - parents/carers will be notified of this.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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
- 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:

- Contacting the school office by 9am on the day of absence, and each subsequent day of absence unless a fixed number of days has been advised by the GP, to let the school know why the child is away.
- The office staff will code the absence accordingly.

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 to ascertain the reason. If no response, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> contact will be contacted. This must be recorded on the absence register/SIMS. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call the police or visit the family home if school have a safeguarding concern.

If unexplained absence continues without explanation, we will call the parent/carer on each day to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer or CFCS.

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 School Attendance Officer will be made and possibly a Fixed Penalty Notice issued.

## 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. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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.

## **REPORTING ATTENDANCE TO PARENTS**

At SPJS we regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels if there is cause for concern. In addition, parents will receive an annual attendance certificate alongside the End of Year Report.

## **LEGAL SANCTIONS**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

In school we promote school attendance by:

- sharing class attendance in assembly and providing a monthly certificate to class with highest attendance.
- Providing before school activities to encourage children who struggle with coming to school. E.g. Kick-start Club
- Share importance of regular attendance with parents at curriculum evenings
- SLT to welcome children into school each morning.
- Staff welcome children to the classroom

## **ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

### **Monitoring Attendance**

#### **The school will:**

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school also tracks attendance through FFT. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **Analysing attendance**

#### **The school will:**

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **Using data to improve attendance**

#### **The school will:**

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

#### **The school will:**

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **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 CPOMS)

- 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 complete a Child Missing In Education Referral to the Local Authority.

## **MONITORING OF THIS POLICY**

The admission committee and curriculum and standards committee of the governing board will monitor the implementation of this policy and will review it as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the admissions committee.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the admissions committee and curriculum and standards committee on behalf of the full governing body.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy

### **Appendix 1: Attendance Codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration

<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day