

Stifford Clays Primary School



'Learning today, leading tomorrow'

Pupil Attendance Policy

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Stifford Clays Primary School is operated by South West Essex Community Education Trust Limited which is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number: 07693309. The registered office is at William Edwards School, Stifford Clays Road, Grays, Thurrock, Essex, RM16 3NJ.



STIFFORD CLAYS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupil Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Stifford Clays Primary we strive to provide the best available learning opportunities for children and prepare them for the future. As part of this we set high expectations of attendance and punctuality. As well as celebrating good attendance through our Friday assembly and termly/yearly rewards we have a system of support and monitoring in place for families who do not meet the attendance expectations.

All children of compulsory school age have the right to full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Stifford Clays Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy has been written in consultation with Teachers and Education Welfare Services. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

- Class teacher will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals and a CAF form for attendance will be completed as relevant.
- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and a plan to support them to catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance improvements will be implemented.
- A full term of 100% attendance is rewarded a bronze badge. A second and third term, within the same academic year, are awarded a silver and gold badge respectively.
- All children with 100% attendance for the year receive a medalQA at the end of the year.
- All children with 100% attendance for each year they have been at Stifford Clays School will receive a special attendance certificate when they leave at the end of Year 6.
- The class with the highest attendance each week holds the attendance trophy.
- The class with the best attendance over the year have a class treat/ trip at the end of the year.
- Members of the leadership team periodically monitor the gate for latecomers. All children arriving after 8.50 a.m. are admitted through the school office and parents are asked to record and explain the late arrival.
- In each term all pupils achieving at least 98% attendance are entered into a draw to win a bike or scooter of their choice.
- Individual circumstances are taken into consideration such as long term proven illness.

What is expected of Parents?

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be issued with a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually under Section 7 of the Education Act 2006 and the amendments made to the Act which came into force on 1st September 2013.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

Parents and carers are expected:

- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- To work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for absences during term time will be refused except in exceptional circumstances.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS and other statutory testing
- Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If a child is absent, school must be notified by 9.30am on the first day of absence, and each subsequent day thereafter, unless an expected date for return has been notified. This can be by telephone, informing a member of office staff, or by a written note delivered to the office. Alternative arrangements can be agreed for non-English speaking parents/carers.

What is expected of the school?

The school will endeavor to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The school will:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- Meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- Have procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention

- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act
- Have a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school
- Have procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- Have procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum
- Follow up with social care on any safeguarding concerns which may be related to a child's attendance or punctuality

What is expected of the Local Authority?

The Local Authority (LA) has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfill their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Recording

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school between 8.40 a.m and 8:50 a.m. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late the office staff will ask the parent to sign a late book that records the name, class, time and reason for lateness. Parents and carers MUST bring late children into the office. If a child arrives unaccompanied by a parent the office staff will complete the record asking the pupil to offer a reason. This will then be checked via a telephone call home. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late MUST register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register officially closes at 8.50 a.m. or 1:05 p.m. and any pupil arriving after this will be marked late for the session. For the morning session, when pupils arrived after 9.15 a.m. they will be marked as 'U' in the register as an unauthorised late. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

The offered reasons for any lates from the previous day or any absences will be assessed and the appropriate code entered into the system.

If a child does not turn up for school, the following procedures are instigated:

- At 9.45am, the office will make a 'first day text' to the child's parent/carers.
- If the parent/carer is unreachable, the school will continue by calling those on the contact lists, including emergency contacts.
- If contact cannot be made, a home visit will be made by the school to determine the location of the pupil.
- If a home visit is not successful and still no contact can be made, the pupil will be classed as a 'missing pupil' and the school have a legal responsibility (Education Act 436A - chapter 2 part 6) to involve external agencies. The Local Authority, Education Welfare Service will then fulfil their

duty of investigating the whereabouts of such children, and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education. This is likely to begin with a home visit.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone. You must provide the school with the appointment card or letter if the child will be absent for a medical appointment. The school may then decide whether to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence.

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, not by the parent, and would normally relate to no more than 10 school days in any 1 year.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided. If contact cannot be made with the family a referral will be made to the education welfare service as the child is 'missing from education'. This procedure forms part of the safeguarding protocols in school. Where an absence causes concern re welfare of a child and no answer can be obtained by telephone, a police welfare check may be requested as part of our duty to safeguard children.

Attendance codes

A set of standard codes is used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register twice daily as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Code

/ Present (AM)

\ Present (PM)

B Educated off site (Not dual registration)

C Other authorised circumstances

D Dual registration

E Excluded

G Family holiday (not agreed)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness(not med/dental etc.appoints)

J Interview

L Late (before reg closed)

M Medical/Dental appointments

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence

P Approved sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

U Late(after registers closed)

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

X DfES # : School closed to pupils

Y Enforced closure

! DfES X : Non-compulsory school age absence

School closed to pupils and staff
* DfES Z: Pupil not on roll
-All should attend / No mark recorded

Understanding types of absence:

Authorised absences are sessions away from school for good reason, such as illness. Children should not come to school if they are unwell but simply 'not feeling right' or absences due to being tired will not be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are sessions away from school which the school deems unreasonable. This type of absence can lead to referral to the education welfare service which may result in a Penalty Notice of legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark (after 9.15am)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays
- Attending the medical appointment of another family member

Please be aware that arrival in school after 9.15am results in an unauthorised absence being recorded.

Persistent Absenteeism is a classification used when a pupil has missed 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason, both authorised and unauthorised. Persistent absence triggers an attendance panel meeting and possibly a referral to the Education Welfare Service. Pupils who are close to becoming persistent absentees will be supported to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices

The school adheres to the Thurrock Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence and refers to the Education Welfare Service in all cases. Persistent lateness may also be a trigger. Penalty notices may be issued by the Education Welfare Service for any unauthorised absence in the following circumstances, not just unauthorised absence for holidays.

- Irregular attendance – at least 12 sessions of any unauthorised absence are recorded against the child's name within the previous 120 sessions. One session is half a day. Parents will receive a warning letter giving them a chance to improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued.
- If a head teacher does not authorise a request from a parent for term time leave of absence, including holidays, and the parent takes leave. There must be at least 10 sessions of unauthorised term time leave. In such circumstances, the school must advise parents of this and how the action conforms to the school's attendance policy.
- Where a pupil of compulsory school age, who has been excluded from school, has been found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. This is explained when a child is excluded from school, and in writing to parents.

In the case of irregular attendance, parents will receive a warning letter giving the parents a chance to improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued.

Monitoring

The Head teacher, Pastoral Manager, Leadership team and the EWO will review the attendance of all the school's pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as being a cause for concern or less than 95% attendance on a more regular basis. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having regular non-attendance informing them of the school's concerns, this letter would normally be triggered by an attendance % of less than 95%. The child's attendance will then be monitored very

closely. If no improvement is seen, the school will write to the parent and require them to attend a meeting which will offer support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a three week period there appears to be no improvement the case will be formally referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Medical Evidence

After 20 absences for minor illness/ailments parents will be asked to provide medical evidence so that the school can track patterns of absence and offer relevant support. Medical evidence could be a prescription, appointment card from the hospital or surgery or a note/phone call from the surgery. Where a child has a recurring medical condition we will strive to support to ensure good attendance. This can be done in partnership with families and medical practitioners.

Requests for leave of absence

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to write to the head teacher, and must complete the relevant application form but may add supporting information. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason in writing and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis.

Examples of circumstances **NOT** considered exceptional:

- Holidays taken in term time due to lower costs/parental work commitments
- Holidays abroad to visit a sick relative
- Pilgrimages by parents
- Holidays booked by surprise by relatives etc

Examples of exceptional circumstances where leave of absence **MAY** be granted:

(evidence may be requested; the full amount of requested absence may not be granted)

- Funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence
- Absence relating to child performances, subject to a license being issued by the educational welfare service
- Religious Observance (Education Act 1994 S444(3) (c) 'on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parents belong)

Request for leave of absence during term time

As from 1st September 2013, the Education regulations prohibits head teachers granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application is made in advance and the head teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The schools attendance policy suggests some circumstances which may be considered exceptional as well as some which will not. This policy is available on the website or from the school office.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. A child who misses 10 days of school will only attain 94.7% attendance.

If absence is not authorised and leave is taken the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a penalty notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Please complete and return the form to the school office 4 weeks in advance of your absence. A separate form should be completed for each child in school. **The forms must be accompanied by a letter outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave is being applied**

Name of Child	
Class	
Date of first absence	
Date of return	
Number of days requested	
Reason for absence:	
Other schools affected by this application (Have you applied for siblings to be granted leave at another school?)	

Signed:..... Date.....

.....
 For office use: Date received:
 Attendance % preceeding 12 weeks
 Number of sessions missed this academic year: Authorised Unauthorised: Total:

Letter head

Date:

Parent:

Further to your request for leave of absence during term time for

After consideration, your request has been: granted or denied

The reasons for this are:

a) The circumstances are not considered to be exceptional

b) Your child's attendance is a concern

c) The absence falls during a significant time in the academic year

Other.....

Please be aware that unauthorised absence from school is subject to referral to the Education Welfare Officer and may result in a penalty notice being issued. Please refer to the school's attendance policy for further information. This policy can be found on the website or from the school office.

Attendance Management Flow Diagram

