



Studlands Rise First School
First Steps on the Learning Journey

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

We believe that children cannot take full advantage of our educational offer if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children and young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and will strive to raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of our pupils. We believe the foundations of securing good attendance in our school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where our pupils will want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Aims

To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.

To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Attendance Targets

To keep whole school attendance above 96%.

Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Role of the Headteacher

- To create, and update, a clear written school attendance policy that follows DfE Guidance (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, September 2022) and ensure its implementation.
- To ensure all staff know and understand their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance (Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2022)
- To develop good support for children with medical conditions, mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND) ensuring compliance with Supporting Children with Medical Conditions at School, December 2015.
- To ensure all staff know and understand their responsibilities for attendance.
- To ensure accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- To ensure staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individuals and the whole school.
- To have clear processes in place to address persistent (Less than 90%) and severe (less than 50%) absence.
- To ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- To monitor and analyse data and trends.
- To report to the Governing Body regularly on attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- To remind parents of their commitment to this policy.
- To build and model respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement.

Headteacher · Mrs A Rinna

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- To ensure a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- To have open and honest communication with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- To liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- To share information on, and work collaboratively with, other schools in the area, Local Authority, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- To ensure the Attendance Policy is applied fairly and consistently and that it recognizes the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.
- To ensure all staff members: treat pupils with dignity; build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries; take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively; understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity; communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being; deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events; use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure; regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality through standard methods of communication with staff, pupils and parents.
- To monitor the implementation of policy and practice.
- To monitor whole school attendance data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of the interventions.
- To establish and ensure implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME.

Role of the Attendance Champion

- To support the Headteacher in the monitoring and implementation of the Attendance Policy.
- To ensure a positive working relationship with the Local Authority Attendance Officer is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- To communicate key messages to pupils and parents.
- If required, hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- To identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- To make sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that the Local Authority is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly via a 10 Day Absence Form.

Role of Teaching Staff

- To ensure the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- To implement the Attendance Policy and ensure it is applied fairly and consistently.
- To ensure that the registers are taken and marked accurately at the start of the morning and the start of the afternoon.
- To inform the Leadership Team of any concerns.
- To emphasise with the pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- To remind parents of their commitment to the Attendance Policy.
- To build and model respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement.
- To ensure a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- When required, to liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.

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- To model respectful relationships.
- To: treat pupils with dignity; build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries; take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively; understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity; communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being.
- To welcome pupils back following a period of absence and provide good catch up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

Role of Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any additional needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

- To ensure that children attend and stay at school every day that school is open.
- To ensure that children arrive punctually (doors open at 8.40 and close at 8.50) and know the importance of good attendance.
- To instill in children an appreciation of attending school regularly.
- To inform the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30 am at the latest. If the school is not informed, a member of the office team will contact the parents.
- To provide the school with an explanation for any absence.
- To inform the school of any changes in contact details.
- To take an active interest in your child's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour, and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- To work in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- To proactively engage with the support offered by the school to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Where possible, to book medical appointments outside of the school day.
- To only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and in advance.
- To treat staff with respect.
- To actively support the work of the school.
- To call staff for help when it is needed.
- To communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.

Working With the Local Authority

Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance and Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance. The Headteacher and Attendance Champion meet with the Local Authority Attendance Officer when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils. Action plans are developed for all persistently absent and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the Local Authority Attendance Officer for advice and guidance with the implementation of these plans. If parents do not proactively engage with the support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the Local Authority Attendance Officer. If this support is not engaged with, statutory intervention from the Local Authority may be requested. This can include: parenting contract, Fixed Penalty Notice Application from school, parenting order, Education Supervision Order, prosecution.

Encouraging Good Attendance

The school encourages good attendance by:

- Using clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve and incentivize attendance and address absence.
- Publicising good attendance through newsletters and the termly report to Governors.
- Keeping parents informed of any attendance issues relating to their child.

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Punctuality

The school doors open at 8.40 and close at 8.50. The register closes at 9.10 and pupils who arrive later than this will be marked as absent for the whole session, although the time they arrived at school will be noted on the attendance register. If a child frequently arrives after the registers have closed, the reasons will be discussed with the parent and support offered.

Pupils at Risk of Persistent Absence (Less than 90% Attendance)

The school will:

- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with identified pupils and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners if the issue cannot be rectified by school alone.

Evidence shows that when a pupil's attendance falls below 90% this can considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects. School will work with parents/carers to address this by:

- Providing support to the child and family to improve attendance and remove any barriers. Where necessary, this includes working with partners.
- Holding more formal conversations with parents who do not engage, to prevent the need for Local Authority legal intervention.

Severe Absence (Less than 50% Attendance)

If a child is severely absent, school will continue to offer support to the child and family in order to remove any barriers, working with other agencies as necessary. A joint approach will be agreed with the Local Authority for all children who are severely absent in order to improve the child's attendance at school.

Absence

Absence can only be authorised by the school. If a child has persistent absence related to illness, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence (GP appointment confirmation, prescription, etc) to put in the child's file to explain the absence. Leave of absence can be applied for in advance but will only be granted if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Our school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures. We expect to work in partnership with parents and carers to address attendance issues. If a child has at least 15 sessions (1 session = half day) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid after 28 days. There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If the penalty is not paid, the Local Authority may prosecute parents or carers for their child's irregular attendance.

Signed: *A. Rinna* (Headteacher)

Signed: *J. Weatherhead* (Chair of Governors)

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