



Stowford School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Legislation

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools and Academies are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

The government expects all schools and academies to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence and pupils in vulnerable groups;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and to act early to address patterns of absence;
- Make appropriate provision for pupils with medical conditions;
- Encourage parents to perform their legal duty in ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend both punctually and regularly;
- Support pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

These requirements are contained in:

- a. The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- b. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended
- c. DfE Statutory Guidance

Aims and Values

Through this policy, Stowford School aims to:

- Improve pupil's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues;
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school;
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education;
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Foundation aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age;
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence;

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties;
- Recognise the key role of staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Statements concerning Rights and Responsibilities in Managing Attendance of:

➤ **Stowford School**

We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.

We will work closely with parents/carers where pupil's absence is cause for concern.

We will support pupils to achieve good attendance and punctuality.

We will support pupils returning to school after prolonged absence.

➤ **Pupils**

To attend regularly and on time.

To be punctual.

To attend with the right books and equipment.

➤ **Parents**

To ensure their child attends the school on those days it is open, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.

To ensure their child attends every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so.

To avoid arranging holidays during term time.

To inform the school immediately if their child is unable to attend.

To avoid making medical appointments during school time as far as possible.

Punctuality/Registration Times

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving to school on time. If a child persistently arrives after the registers close, cases will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Cloakroom doors open at 8.45am and registration is at 8.55am. Children who arrive after 8.55am must enter through the main school reception so that their lateness and an explanation are recorded. The register officially closes at 9.30am. (Adjustments to the school day may be made in specific circumstances, such as in response to COVID-19).

Authorised Absences

- Genuine illness.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments.
- Days of religious observance.
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement.
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces.
- External examinations.
- When Traveller children are travelling with their parents.

Absence in Term Time

Permission must be sought in advance to take a pupil out of school during term time, which can only be requested from a parent/carer with parental responsibility and with whom the child normally lives. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child's attendance being satisfactory up to the date covered by this request. If the school withdraws the authorisation due to the attendance dropping to an unacceptable level, the parent/carer will be informed of this in writing. If a request is refused and the child is taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may then be liable to a penalty notice, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Absence for non-medical reasons must be requested in advance on a S2 form, available on the school website or from the school office.

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments are advised to be outside the school day; parents/carers should provide a medical appointment card/letter/screenshot if requested in school time.

When Attendance Causes Concern - what happens:

- School Letters and meetings:
If a child's attendance drops below 90% the school will contact parents/carers to advise them of their child's low attendance/persistent lateness and provide appropriate support if required to help to improve the child's attendance/punctuality.
- Referral to EWO for possible legal intervention, meetings:
Where action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance/punctuality leading to percentage attendance being below 85% for a particular child, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed and appropriate action taken. This will take the form of an official letter or contact from the EWO. A legal meeting may follow.
- Referral to the Local Authority for Formal Legal action:
Action could be Parental Responsibility Measures, which includes the issue of a Penalty Notice: one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £60 if paid within the first 21 days. Please note, if a Penalty Notice has already been issued within the previous 2 years then the Local Authority will proceed straight to Magistrate's Summons.

Attendance Management Procedures

- Offer Early Help.
- Identifying strategies to improve attendance for individual child/children.
- How to inform school of absence (each day child is absent):
- Parents/Carers should contact the school to provide a reason for absence each day their child is away from school. A reason for a period of absence is always required. There is an answerphone for

absence messages. The school will contact parents/carers who have not offered a reason. Notification of absence is not accepted via email.

- Medical evidence in cases of repeated absence:

Medical evidence may be requested where attendance is low due to repeated report of illness.

- Escalating attendance letters may be issued where necessary.
- School support for pupils with medical conditions: Stowford School is an inclusive community that aims to support and welcome pupils with medical conditions and complies with the DfE Statutory Guidance for 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'. It has a responsibility to make the school welcoming and supportive to pupils with medical conditions who currently attend and to those who may enrol in the future. This school aims to provide all children with all medical conditions the same opportunities as others at school.

Children Missing Education

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points - when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school - unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

Education Welfare Service can offer and their role in improving attendance:

Attendance Advice and Guidance

- Provide advice and guidance on any problems that may impact on the ability of a child to access or sustain an acceptable level of attendance in education, including welfare issues, behaviour and special educational needs.
- Monitor School Attendance against Government targets and develop strategic policies and procedures in partnership with schools and other agencies to improve performance. Continually work towards the reduction of Persistent Absence in Devon. Liaise with pupils and their families, schools and other support agencies to address issues leading to individual poor attendance.
- Ensure the Safeguarding and Safety of Children in educational settings by providing regular and appropriate training to all individuals working with young people, working collaboratively with other agencies to quickly identify, continually monitor and adequately support 'children at risk'. Identify children currently missing from education to reintroduce and reintegrate learning into their lives.
- Work collaboratively with schools and other agencies to help Reduce Youth Crime, through the reduction in persistent absence and the use of rehabilitation work including the engagement in appropriate activities of existing offenders and those young people most at risk of becoming involved in criminal activities.

Reference to Safeguarding Policy

Our school also has safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of our pupils and this policy should be read in conjunction with the West Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (available on the school website www.stowford.devon.sch.uk).

Children who have not been collected from school at the end of the school day

When children have not been collected at home time the class teacher or office staff will contact parents/carers. If children have not been collected by 3.45pm, they will be taken to after school club and there will be a charge for this service. If there has still been no contact at 4.45pm other agencies will be notified and involved.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the *Governors* to monitor overall attendance and information regarding attendance is provided regularly to the local governing body (LGB) and the Trust Board of Westcountry Schools Trust. The LGB also has responsibility for this policy and ensuring that it is implemented. The *Governors* will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

Stowford LGB

March 2021