



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Stoke By Nayland CofE Primary School

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STOKE BY NAYLAND COFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Stoke By Nayland CofE Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Stoke By Nayland CofE Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader
The Headteacher will act as the Attendance Leader and will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the Local Governing Body termly. The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration
The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day, once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf), but may delegate the actual marking to a member of the support staff.

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- i) The register will be called promptly at **9.05 am** and **1.15 pm** by each form tutor and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- ii) The registers will close at **9.30 am** and **1.45 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be marked in accordance with the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.5 on page 6).

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.
- ii) Our school recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, and may send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at our school will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - A pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - A pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - In **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday, for which the parents have sought permission in advance, the pupils overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
 - (b) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (c) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand);
 - (d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

- (e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
 - (f) The pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
 - (g) The pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
 - (h) In other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- No explanation has been given by the parent;
 - The school is not satisfied with the explanation;
 - The pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
 - The pupil is shopping during school hours;
 - The pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
 - The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
 - The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Staff Training

The Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored and patterns in absence may be tracked. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at our school and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in staff meetings and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. Good attendance is celebrated with certificates at assemblies.
- 4.2 Our School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. .
First-day calling
Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents, the school may send a letter to them by first class post.
- 4.3 Meetings with parents
Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a term period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences and work together to find a way forward. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.
- 4.4 Referral to the Education Welfare Officer
If there continue to be unauthorised absences the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- 4.5 Lateness and punctuality
Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3 (ii) on page 4) will be marked **absent for the whole session** (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. Persistent lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para. 4.3). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- 4.6 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will have a late code entered on the register and any pattern of lateness will be monitored by staff. If there appears to be a problem, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Headteacher to seek a way forward.
- 4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the School Office with the adult responsible for them. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**
- 4.8 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, should follow the same procedure. If the School Office is unattended, the child should be taken directly to his/her class teacher.

4.9 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means that the pupil will not only be receiving a full-time education. It also potentially renders them vulnerable to harm. Our school takes this very seriously and will do all within its means to make sure this does not happen. In the very unlikely event that this happens, the school will try to make contact with their parents immediately and inform the police.

4.10 Assessments

May and early June are the times of year when most statutory and in school assessments take place. Requests for holiday absence may not be authorised during these times.

5. **Term-time Holidays**

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 Our school will consider every application individually. Specific reasons for holiday to be taken in term time will be asked for and each case considered on its merits. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence **in advance** of the intended holiday. Previous attendance patterns will be taken into account when considering applications.

5.3 Our school will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend some time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable holiday rota;

(Please note that proof of holiday restrictions from your employer may be required)

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday
- availability of the desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.
- so that a holiday may be had with other family members.

5.5 Our school will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 Our school will not authorise a holiday during periods of national tests for year 6 i.e. SATS.

6. Extended leave of absence

- 6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas our school will take account of the circumstances.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

- 7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by our school.

- 7.2 Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

- 7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary School on the first day of absence. A phone call is sufficient and will be recorded with the reasons for absence.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations and taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' responsibilities

- 8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school, they or their parents should speak to their class teacher.

- 8.2 Pupils should attend school on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence unless it has been fully dealt with by phone.

9. Local Governors' responsibilities

- 9.1 The Local Governing Body will make arrangements to ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. The attendance target will be reviewed annually and more frequently as necessary and returns to the LA made in the required time frame.

10 Fixed Penalty Notice

When 4 sessions of unauthorised absence have accrued in any academic year a warning letter will be issued to parents. If a further 4 unauthorised absence sessions are accumulated then parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60 per child per adult, payable within 21 days. Fixed penalty Notices may also be issued for persistent lateness. The fixed penalty fine is collected and kept by the Local Authority, not the school.

11 Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*:

Be healthy –

- attendance at school supports children’s emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

Stay safe –

- schools and Suffolk County Council have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly

Enjoy and achieve –

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings

Make a positive contribution –

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

Achieve economic well-being –

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy every 3 years with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

Signed:

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Date 6th December 2017

Review December 2020

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called at **9:05 am** and the afternoon register at **1:15 pm**.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at **9:30 am** in the morning and **1:45pm** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between **9:10am** and **9:30 am** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **9:30 am** he/she will be marked **absent**.

If your child arrives between **1:20 and 1:45 pm** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **1:45 pm** he/she will be marked **absent**.

(Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the School Office or their class teacher so that we are aware of whom is in the building),)

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. If the reason for absence is straightforward the original phone call will suffice. However, if an absence is more complex e.g. needing more than 2 days or where a phone call cannot provide the whole explanation we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- A dancing/music exam
- Authorised sporting activity

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the Headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATS assessments. You would need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Headteacher then approved the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

8. What about assessments and SATS?

May and early June are the times of year when most statutory and in-school assessments take place. Requests for holiday absence may not be authorised during these times. Other assessments are also carried out at least termly.

9. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education. Your child will usually bring home a school book and reading diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

10. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact the Headteacher and make an appointment to discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

11. Additional Information for Parents

If you are away for one week, your child will miss approximately:

- 5 hours of maths
- 5 hours of literacy
- 10 hours of science, RE, music, art, PE, humanities, DT and ICT

If your child has a 2 week holiday during term time and 1 week sickness, they will miss approximately:

- 15 hours literacy, 15 hours maths, and 30 hours of other subjects

If this pattern were repeated throughout your child's school life they would miss 36 weeks of school education (1 school year is 39 weeks)

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

ATTENDING SCHOOL EVERY DAY

A GUIDE FOR PUPILS

1. Attending school every day the school is available and on time

Excellent attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary School. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- get a job – employers like people who are reliable. Remember, your attendance at school is shown in your end of year report.

2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

You will also need a note from your parents to explain ALL absences from school. The Headteacher will talk to your parents if you regularly arrive at school after 9.00 am in the morning. If the explanation is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

3. Need help?

Problems with your schoolwork? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

If so, you should **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your class teacher, the Headteacher, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

Penalty Notice information for Parents and Carers

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is a fine issued by Suffolk County Council to parents for a child's unauthorised absence from school.

The law says that parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and absent from school without good reason are committing an offence and the parents/carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 authorising Local Authorities to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

Schools decide whether they adopt Suffolk County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. If the protocol is adopted by the school, the school can refer any unauthorised pupil absence to the Lead Attendance Officer at Suffolk County Council. If the referral is appropriate, the Lead Attendance Officer will process the referral and issue a Penalty Notice.

When will a Penalty Notice be issued?

Suffolk County Council will issue a Penalty Notice:

- When a referral from a school has been received notifying Suffolk County Council that unauthorised absence has occurred **following the criteria stated in this Attendance Policy**
- Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

What is a truancy sweep?

A truancy sweep is part of a series of planned operations aimed at ensuring young people are in school learning. This is where a parent is stopped with their child (under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) by a Police Officer and an Education Welfare Officer and asked to provide a satisfactory explanation for the child's absence, and which has been confirmed as authorised by the school.

How is the penalty notice fine calculated?

Suffolk County Council will issue each parent/carer with a £60 Penalty Notice fine for each child who has unauthorised absence. This must be paid within 21 days or it will increase to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. The penalty must be paid in full and not by instalments.

Parents will not receive more than one Penalty Notice per child in any academic year. Further unauthorised absences of that pupil should be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for appropriate action.

How do I pay and what happens if I do not pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice.

If you do not pay the penalty in full within 28 days of the issue, Suffolk County Council is required to start legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. This may lead to a fine up to £1,000.

Payment of the Penalty Notice discharges parents/carers liability for the period to which the Penalty Notice relates.

What if I want to appeal?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued.