

Attendance policy



Stoke Bishop Church of England Primary School

Approved by: Leadership & Management
Committee

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Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. School procedures	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	4
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	5
6. Attendance monitoring	6
7. Roles and responsibilities	6
8. Monitoring arrangements	7
9. Links with other policies	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	8

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our school's vision is 'Believing it's Possible'. This is a commitment to all our pupils that they should have access to a successful, positive school provision. To fulfill this we aim to ensure that they attend school at all times where possible, giving them the opportunity to 'flourish'.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils should arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers must notify the school telephone on 0117 3772173. If it is out of hours then a message can be left on the answer machine and/or by email stoke.bishop.p@bristol-schools.uk

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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.

If the school is not satisfied that the illness is genuine, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Notice of any absence for appointments should be given by filling in the Absence Request form found [here](#) on the website and handed in to the school office at least three days before the appointment.

Please note that medical and dental appointments on Friday afternoons require evidence of the appointment and will otherwise be counted as unauthorised, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Parents should provide this evidence such as a scan / photo image of an email or letter to the office, along with the Absence Request form.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The Headteacher may seek to meet with Parents/Carers, where any pupil shows a consistent pattern of lateness over a three week period, in order to discuss strategies that resolve this issue.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- *A text is sent to parents by 10.00am*
- *If there is no response a follow up call is made by 10.30am*
- *If there is no response to this then alternative contacts are followed up until contact has been made and the child's absence established and explained by the parent*

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are informed 3 x year of their child's attendance record as part of the Learning Meeting Summary. In addition, where their child's attendance has fallen below 90% at the point of termly monitoring, they will receive communication to inform them of their child's actual level of attendance and what the school deems to be the appropriate response.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events or circumstances which are unforeseen, unplanned or where you have no reasonable choice other than for your child not to attend school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

There are other reasons why a child's absence may be authorised from school, such as an agreed family holiday, a funeral or a visit to another school. These will only be authorised where the Head teacher feels the request is appropriate and will not impact on the child's learning. Such decisions are made on the merit of each individual case.

The school is not currently able to support requests for Flexi-schooling.

Where a child's absence is below 90% at the point of termly monitoring, parents / carers will receive a monitoring letter to indicate the current attendance figure and what actions the school may be seeking to take.

- *Parents/ Carer may be asked to ensure their child's attendance is maintained in order to improve their overall percentage.*
- *They may be required to meet to discuss the situation and agree expectations / strategies to help improve attendance levels.*
- *An appointment may have been made for them to meet with the Educational Welfare Officer in order to agree expectations and strategies that will impact significantly on the pupil's rate of attendance.*

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. The headteacher will inform parents when returning the Absence Request form, if the absence is unauthorised and whether it potentially meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice.

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

The decision on whether or not to request the issuing of a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Stoke Bishop Church of England Primary School, we understand the importance of promoting and recognising good attendance by all pupils. We do this by:

- Weekly announcements of Class of the week for attendance in the Newsletter
- Termly certificates for 100% attendance at the end of Autumn, Spring and Summer terms
- Annual certificates for 100% attendance at the end of each academic year
- Promoting the importance of school attendance in learning discussions – especially PSHE sessions

Where a pupil's attendance is identified as low (below 90%) school will take specific actions to communicate with parents/ carers in order to improve the situation. A monitoring letter is sent to parents to indicate the current attendance figure and what actions the school may be seeking to take. This may include

- A reminder to Parents/ Carers to ensure their child's attendance is maintained in order to improve their overall percentage.
- They may be required to meet with the Classteacher, Hub Leader or Headteacher to discuss the situation and agree expectations / strategies to help improve attendance levels. At this point a member of staff may be allocated to support with strategies that help to overcome the difficulties around the pupil's attendance.

- An appointment may have been made for them to meet with the Headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer in order to agree expectations and strategies that will impact significantly on the pupil's rate of attendance.

All such actions are seen by the school as aiming to support parents/ carers and at all times their individual circumstances will be taken into account. Where we see an improvement in a child's attendance we will contact the parent/carer to recognise this and seek to reinforce that improvement with any further measures the parent/carer may find helpful.

If parents / carers are concerned that their child's attendance may be affected by on-going circumstances they are encouraged to contact the classteacher or a member of the hub team who will support and advise them as to an appropriate course of action.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer (Mrs Karen Jones) monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and termly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill, unless the school has indicated otherwise.

If a pupil's absence goes above three days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer, if the circumstances have not been explained sufficiently.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

We collect attendance data and store it on our SIMs programme. This is used to support us in:

- tracking the attendance of individual pupils
- identifying whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern,
- monitoring and evaluating those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed Annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day