



# **Stillness Infants & Junior School**

## **Attendance Policy**

Date of Policy:	February 2022	Approved by:
Renewal Date:	February 2023	Teaching & Learning

## **Aims**

Stillness Infant School and Stillness Junior School aim to create an inclusive, nurturing and welcoming environment in which children are stimulated to grow in self-esteem and experience success. We aim to encourage the educational development of all children by promoting the importance of school attendance. We aim to work in partnership with governors, parents and carers, the Local Authority and other professionals to support students in achieving optimum attendance at school and work together to create a school community that is a pleasant and stimulating place to learn and grow.

**Our schools aim to meet their obligations with regard to school attendance by:**

- **Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;**
- **Acting early to address patterns of absence;**
- **Offer advice and support to parents in undertaking their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and punctually.**

## **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.

## **School Procedures**

### **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 (morning) session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school gates open at 8.45am on each school day;

The register for the first session in the juniors will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.20am. After 9.20am it will be an unauthorised late.

The register for the first session in the infants will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am. After 9.30am it will be an unauthorised late.

The register for the second (afternoon) session in the juniors will be taken at 1.30pm.

The register for the second (afternoon) session in the infants will be taken at 1.10pm.

### **Unplanned Absence**

Parents/carers must notify the school on the day of an unplanned absence if the child is unable to attend due to ill health and should do so by **9.00am or as soon as is practically possible**.

The schools 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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

A number of qualified First Aiders are on site throughout the school day, therefore, if any child is unwell, they will be looked after and you will be contacted if it is agreed that your child should be sent home. Sometimes children wake up in the morning feeling a little unwell - please send them in as most young people feel better once they are in school.

We understand that there will be occasions when your child is unable to attend school and the expectation is that parents report absence on a daily basis to the school office by calling the school on 0208 690 1208 (Stillness Infants) 0208 690 1416 (Stillness Juniors). The call should be made to school first thing in the morning, as soon as you become aware of the fact that your child will not be able to attend on the day.

### **Medical or Dental Appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising such absences; however, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Advising school of any appointments at the earliest opportunity and providing a copy of an appointment card or letter would be helpful in allowing the school to authorise absences.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to such absences can be found under 'Authorised and Unauthorised Absence'.

### **Punctuality**

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

Children arriving late to school must sign in at the School Office – this is for both registration and health & safety purposes e.g. in the event of a fire.

## **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.

**Unauthorised absence** is any absence **not authorised by the school and is not an approved educational activity**. The absence is therefore illegal. Schools do not have to accept parent reasons for absence – schools are expected to make a reasoned judgement with regard to each absence and can be considered on both individual merits and as part of any pattern of behaviour.

An approved educational activity is where a child is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. It is important that the school register accurately reflects the approved activity, using the correct code to distinguish which activity e.g. work experience, sporting activity, school trip etc.

## **Reporting to Parents**

As and when necessary, the school's Education Welfare Officer will contact parents to ensure that they are aware of concerns relating to school attendance, especially when attendance falls below school and government expectations. There is also an obligation for schools to ensure that parents are advised of the possible consequences of failure to secure their child's regular attendance.

Missed schooling, even for genuine reasons, has a negative impact on academic achievement. Studies and government findings prove the link between school attendance and attainment. Education research has found that pupils who attain 96% to 100% attendance achieve one grade higher at GCSE, 'A' Level and BTEC than those with 90% and under.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### **Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence**

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

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 Head Teacher's discretion.

Where there are siblings in either the infant or junior school, both Head Teachers will consider the application and reach a joint decision.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained under Medical and Dental Appointments;
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;

- Traveller children 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;
- Flexi-schooling requests will be considered on a case by case basis and at the Head Teacher's discretion.

## **Legal Sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a Penalty Notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision as to whether or not a Penalty Notice is issued ultimately rests with the Head Teacher, following the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences accrued over a period of time;
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission;
- Where an excluded child 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 may decide to prosecute the parent or withdraw the Notice.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

The Attendance Officer monitors children's absence on a regular basis.

If a child's absence falls below 95%, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents, the child's attendance continues to fall, we will consider involving the Local Authority.

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

Children's absence data is collected each term and published nationally through the DfE's School Absence National Statistics releases. The underlying school absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body**

The Governors and the Head Teacher are responsible for ensuring that the school's Attendance Policy and practice comply with all legal regulatory conditions described in this document and are consistent with principles of good practice, promoting equalities and social inclusion.

## **The Head Teacher**

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

The Head Teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual children and in issuing Penalty Notices, where appropriate.

## **The Education Welfare Officer**

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Monitor attendance data at the school and individual children's levels;
- Report concerns about attendance to the designated school Attendance Lead;
- Work with the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence;
- Arrange calls, visits and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- Arrange for Penalty Notices and Court Warnings to be issued;
- Prepare witness statements and provide relevant evidence and exhibits to the Local Authority in order to pursue prosecution under Sections 444(1) & 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996.

## **Class Teachers**

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

## **Office/ Reception Staff**

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

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the schools' Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

## **Links with Other Policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy as well as the school's Behaviour Policy.

## **Appendix: Attendance Codes**

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

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

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

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

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