



Stonehouse Park
Infant School

The BEST start for every child so every child can be the best they can be.

Attendance Policy

Updated September 2019

Presented to Governors November 2020

Our Vision Statement

For every child to set out confidently on the adventure of learning: curious about the world, excited about their future, positive of their ability and caring towards other people.

Our Aims:

Curious about the world

- To promote awareness and understanding of other cultures.
- To develop the children's motivation, discovering their special interests and talents.
- To introduce children to a wide range of new experiences, ideas and activities.
- To encourage the children to ask questions about the world, talk about their ideas and express their opinions.

Excited about their future

- To make children excited about learning and eager to move on to the next stage of their learning.
- To help children to look beyond their immediate surroundings and their own personal circumstances.
- To shape a curriculum which will develop the knowledge and skills that children will need to meet the challenges of their future lives.
- To involve children in problem solving and develop their capacity to be active citizens

Positive of their ability

- To help children to reach the highest levels of achievement in all they do.
- To demonstrate to all children that they are able to learn and that they can succeed.
- To provide the highest quality of teaching for all children and to meet every child's individual needs.
- To develop children's awareness of their own learning and the value of resilience, perseverance and dedication.

Caring of other people

- To develop sensitivity to the feelings and concerns of other people.
- To demonstrate compassion, respect for others and develop a moral understanding.
- To learn how to co-operate and work with other people.

The aim of this policy

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their Education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that every parent/carer makes sure their child attends regularly, on time, and this policy sets out how together , parents/carers and the school, we will achieve this.

Points of reference in writing this policy

The Local Authority (LA) asks that as a maintained school we:

1. Ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually.
Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school, lateness is discouraged.
2. Contact Parents quickly when a pupils is absent, without known reason, ideally on the first day. It is our policy to contact parents on the first day.
3. Follow up unexplained absences. *Where a pupil is absent without prior permission an explanation is required, if one is not forthcoming the absence will be treated as unauthorised.*
4. Follow up attendance when it falls below the school's target level for that year. *Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reasonable doubt as to the validity of the explanation.*
5. Notify the LA of children who seem to have moved on, without known destination, within fifteen school days of their last attendance.
6. Tell the LA of pupils whose parents have opted for home education.
7. Set out clear information and expectations for pupils and parents in the school prospectus and reinforce them through news letters etc.
8. In September 2013 the government amended its regulations regarding authorised absence from schools, Head Teachers **will no longer** have discretion to authorise absence for the purpose of a family holiday for children of statutory school age. Information on the Department for Education website states that **'Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless these are rare and exceptional, e.g, serious family illness or bereavement.'**

Stonehouse Park Infant School defines exceptional circumstances as follows:

**"A rare and exceptional circumstances might arise when there are no alternative means of dealing with the necessary absence.
The pupil's emotional well being would be affected by refusing the absence."**

Criteria will be applied each time a Parent makes an application see Appendix 1.

- Where there is a long term difficulty with attendance the school will do it's best to ascertain the reasons for the absence and work with the family to address any problems (please also refer to the school behaviour and SEND policies).
- Even where absence is authorised, we will be alert to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.
- In promoting regular attendance this school works closely with the Local Authority, whose intervention is sought when the school has failed to bring about an improvement in attendance. This may result in warning notification, penalty notices and further prosecution.

Parents' responsibilities:

Parents and those with parental responsibilities are required by law to ensure that children of compulsory school age, the term after a child's 5th birthday, receive full-time education. (Education Act 444(1)). This means that they are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. They are also responsible for informing schools of any absence as soon as possible, we would expect this, on the first day of absence. They should state the nature of the illness and when the child is expected to return to school.

Telephone calls, letters or personal contacts are acceptable. The school may also wish see official evidence of any hospital, dental or doctors appointments. We state our attendance procedures at parents' meetings, in the prospectus and at other opportunities, e.g. when letters are sent home.

Stonehouse Park Infant School ensures that parents are :

- reminded of their statutory duties
- aware of our school's requirements as regards notification of absence.

Registration:

Pupils are marked present or absent on an attendance register at the **beginning** of each morning and afternoon session. Absences are registered as authorised or unauthorised.

Registers are kept accurately using an LA prescribed protocol as they may be used in evidence in cases where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences.

(Ref. Education act 444(1A)).

Consistency of registration practice is vital. All teachers within the school operate to the same rules.

Responsibilities of the Local Authority- Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team:

LAs are charged in law with enforcing school attendance, Gloucestershire LA can apply to the courts for an education supervision order and, where necessary, they can prosecute parents.

All continuous absences of more than one week are reported and reports are made on those pupils who fail to attend regularly, except where such absences are covered by a medical certificate.

Permissible reasons for absence

- the pupil was absent with permission from an authorised person within the school.
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious group to which the family belongs.
- the school is not within walking distance of the home and no suitable arrangements have been made for transport to school, boarding accommodation or enabling the child to be registered at a school nearer home.

There are also some exceptions for the children of travellers.

- **Notes from parents:** Only the **school** can approve absence not parents. The school does not have to accept the parents' offered explanation as a valid reason for absence. If there are doubts about the explanation offered, or where there is no explanation, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.
- **Illness, medical and dental appointments:** Such absences are considered authorised providing that the school is satisfied that the illness, appointments etc. are genuine. However Parents should try to make routine appointments such as dental check- ups during school holidays and after school hours.
- **Lateness:** Lateness is discouraged. Registers are kept open for a reasonable time. Where pupils miss registration and fail to provide an adequate explanation they will be marked as unauthorised absence for that session. If a child arrives late and misses registration this must be noted for the purposes of emergency evacuation.

- **Shopping during school hours:** It is highly unlikely that such absences can be justified.
- **Days off to celebrate birthdays:** It is highly unlikely that such absences can be justified.
- **Exceptional /Special occasions:** Whether or not an authorised absence can be granted for this category will depend upon the circumstances.
- **Family bereavements:** The school responds sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or associated events. Such absences are usually authorised. Where a pupil is absent for more than the agreed period, early contact is made with the family.
- **Days of religious observance:** An offence is not committed where the absence results from participation in a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- **Traveller children:** Travellers are protected from prosecution if they can show that the nature of their trade requires travel from place to place and that the child has attended school as regularly as possible.
- **Off-site activities:** These fall into two categories, school directed e.g. educational visits and individual activities, e.g. music examinations. School activities will normally be registered as absent. Such absences will be classed as authorised. Where the activity is of a more exceptional individual nature the school will usually authorise absence.
- **Excluded pupils:** Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded he or she will remain on the school roll. This will be treated as authorised absence. If a pupil has been permanently excluded his or her absence should be authorised until after review. If the exclusion is confirmed, he or she will be taken off the school roll.

School procedures for marking and monitoring attendance.

Consistency of registration practice is vital. All teachers within the school operate to the same rules.

When a reason for absence has not been offered on the first day of absence the class teacher will inform the administration office who will contact parents on the first day of absence to verify reasons for absence.

If a pupil is absent for a further five days or more and the reason for absence has not indicated a continued absence the Head Teacher will contact Parents to discuss the reasons for a pupil's absence.

If a pupil frequently has short periods of absence or is consistently late the class Teacher and the administration officer, in monitoring pupil attendance will alert the Head Teacher who will endeavour to discuss the situation with the parent in the first instance, if the situation continues the Head Teacher will write to parents expressing concerns through use of a warning letter.

Letters will be sent out regularly (once a term) to parents who have children whose attendance is a cause for concern, without an exceptional reason.

Continuous periods of absence

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee if they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. The school will monitor all absence fully and any case that is seen to be of concern will result in appropriate actions being taken.

- 15% absence or more will result in a Warning letter being issued.
- 10 consecutive absences or more will result in an investigation and a warning letter will be issued.
- More than 10 consecutive absences which have not been authorised will result in a Penalty notice being issued following further investigation by the L.A. (Currently this equates to £60).
- Further unauthorised absence may result in the L.A. commencing Court Proceedings.

Please read this policy in conjunction with the Staff attendance policy, Home and School Agreement, Behaviour policy The Education Act Section 444(1A), LEA attendance guidance. Other references: www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/prosecutions/index.cfm

This policy must be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Safeguarding Policy

Review Date Autumn 2020

Appendix 1

Criteria to be applied when an application for authorised absence during term time:

- The child's previous attendance history.
- The age of the child(ren).
- The child's stage of education.
- The time of year (SATs or exams).
- The nature of the absence (an exceptional circumstance).

Where the school and Parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence must be marked as unauthorised.

Children Missing from Education

The school will follow GCC policy in relation to missing children and mandatory procedures for the Local Authority Officers, educational establishments and their Governing bodies. Multi-Agency partners, particularly Health and Police services may also be engaged in the following procedures should a child or young person go missing.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be flagged for review twelve months after implementation.

Who is a Child Missing from Education?

For the purpose of this document a Child Missing from Education is defined as: *“Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative curriculum, home education), and has been out of any education provision for 20 school days.*

Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. These might include:

- Young people who have committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Young runaways
- Children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Children of refugees and asylum seeking families

- Children in new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have fixed addresses
- Looked after children
- Children with a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller background
- Children who are privately fostered
- Young carers
- Children from transient families
- Teenage mothers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school (particularly those excluded illegally) ([DCSF guidance on Exclusions](#)).

This Policy does not replace any of the [Child Protection Procedures](#). Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns must be observed at all times.

Mandatory procedure

The implementation of these procedures will be endorsed by all Gloucestershire Schools, Children's Services, and partner agencies to help to ensure that all children within Gloucestershire achieve.

To limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system, a range of systematic processes and procedures have been identified.

Although the Regulations (2006) state that a child may be deleted from roll after 20 school days of continuous absence without good reason, there is a clear responsibility to ensure that the correct procedures of investigating this absence has been followed as CME may raise potential child protection issues

If schools believe a child or family to have gone missing they must NOT remove any child from their roll without following the checklist procedures.

School checklist for children whose whereabouts are unknown to be completed for pupils who have gone 'missing' or where a forwarding school or address is not known

Name of pupil.....DOB.....AGE.....

Address.....

Name(s) of parent(s)/carer(s).....

Tel. number.....

Name of siblings & DOB.....

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Checklist of action to be taken by school staff to locate the pupil(s)

	Action taken	Who & When	Outcome
1	Check internal school records, check records of Junior School & Children's Centre where there are siblings.		
2	Checks with friends, siblings and relatives of the child		
3	Telephone calls made/letters sent		
4	If Children & Families Team involved, notify as soon as concern arises		
5	Discussion / referral made to EWS with attached referral form		

A If after all enquiries by school have been exhausted, the whereabouts of the pupil is still unknown, discuss the removal of the pupil from the school roll with the Education Welfare Service. The school must still maintain ownership of the pupils records until advised by the Education Welfare Service. Removal from roll must comply with DCSF Regulations and LA's procedure and must not take place until the Education Welfare Service have completed their enquiries.

B The school must create a Common Transfer File (CTF) and post electronically on the missing pupil database (S2S)

C A copy of this form should be forwarded to: - Melanie Warner, CME Officer, Education Welfare Service, Grange Road, Tuffley, Gloucester. GL4 0DJ. Telephone 01452 550505 Fax 01452 550556

Signature of Head Teacher.....School.....

Date.....

Following failure to locate the child or young person after initial enquiries the school must:

Discuss the case with the school EEI Officer who will make additional enquires

Comply with DCSF Regulations and the County's Children Missing Education procedure when removing a pupil from school roll which must not take place until the EEI Service has completed their enquiries and advised the school in writing to do so.

Create a Common Transfer File (CTF) and post electronically on the missing pupil database (S2S)

Children Missing Education



