



The Stalyhill Schools' Federation

Attendance Pupil Policy

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Rationale

Every child's attendance and punctuality is important at Stalyhill Infant and Junior Schools. Good attendance and punctuality is essential to the quality and progression in learning necessary for every child.

Principles

The schools use an electronic (computerised) system of registration. The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (e.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day.)

Registers are completed accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and therefore a day counts as two sessions.

Attendance is regularly monitored by the class teachers, attendance coordinator, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Governing Body.

Registers are officially checked by Education Welfare Officers to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

Children missing 10% or more of their school sessions are recorded as **persistently absent**.

The schools work hard to ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued and this also applies to pupils returning from absences.

Good attendance is rewarded on an individual and whole class basis.

Parental Responsibility- Defining Who is a Parent

It is important that schools and local authorities are aware that parents may be recognised differently under education law and under family law. [Section 576 of the Education Act 1996](#) states that, in relation to a child or young person, a 'parent' includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility for or care of the child.

For the purposes of education law, the Department for Education (DfE) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, a guardian or other relative
- any person who, although they are not a biological parent and do not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Example A foster carer or a family-and-friends carer who does not have parental responsibility but has been delegated the responsibility for taking day-to-day decisions about the child.

If a person is not the biological parent of a child, does not have parental responsibility for the child, and the child no longer lives with them, it is unlikely they will be recognised as a parent. Any disputes about whether a person is a child's 'parent' within the meaning of [section 576 of the Education Act 1996](#) are for the courts to decide.

DfE may also refer to a 'corporate parent' within statutory and non-statutory guidance. This term is used to describe local authorities and partner organisations that contribute to services provided to looked-after children, namely children who are the subject of a care order. A care order gives the local authority (the 'corporate parent') parental responsibility under [section 33\(3\) of the Children Act 1989](#).

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Arrival and Registration

All children should be in the playground and be ready to come into school each day at

Infant School	8.45am
Junior School	8.30am

At the Infant School children are collected from the playground and brought into school through the classroom doors. At the Junior School children line up at their classroom doors when a member of staff on duty has blown the whistle. Any child arriving after their class has entered school should enter school through the main (visitors) entrance and be signed in by a member of the office staff where they will be recorded as arriving late.

Morning registration will take place at the start of school and the registers will remain open for 15 minutes.

Infant School:	8.45am start, registers close at 9.00am
Junior School:	8.30am start, registers close at 8.45am

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Any pupils arriving after registers close will be marked as having unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation.

Afternoon registration is:

Infant School:	1.15pm start, registers close at 1.30pm
Junior School:	1.00pm start, registers close at 1.15pm

First Day Absence

Parents/carers must contact the school before 10.00am if their child is absent. This can be done through ParentMail or telephone. Parents/carers must provide details of the person leaving the message, the child's name and their reason for absence.

If you have chosen to remove your child from school for a holiday, then this must also be followed up in writing.

If no contact has been made by 10.30am then the office staff will attempt to contact parents/carers through ParentMail or telephone to find out why the child is absent.

Information received is transferred to the registers and class teachers informed. In the case of identified vulnerable pupils and children on the Attendance Monitoring List, the information is passed to the Headteacher who will make a decision on any action to be taken.

Second and Third Day Absence

If no contact has been made on the second day, a telephone call will be made to the parents/carers and the adult listed as the second emergency contact e.g. grandparent.

Continuing Absence

If no contact has been made after 3 days, then a pupil may be considered as "missing in education". For this reason, an attempt will be made, by the school, to hand deliver a 3-day absence letter. The letter will request that the parent/carer contacts school as a matter of urgency. It will state that failure to do so will result in collaboration with other agencies which may include Education Welfare Services, Police or Social Services. If no contact is made, then a CME (Child Missing in Education) form will be submitted to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

In delivering the letter the school may confirm that a family have moved from the address that is registered with the school. In this case a CME (Child Missing in Education) form will be submitted to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

Daily confirmation of absence

Parents/carers must provide daily confirmation of absence for **every day that a child is absent**.

Authorised Absence

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious Observance in accordance with Local Authority guidelines
- Attendance at examinations with a registered body
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside school hours
- Special Circumstances (authorised by the Headteacher). All considerations for special circumstances must be discussed with the Headteacher.
- Permanent or fixed term exclusions
- Visits to view other schools

Holidays in Term Time

From the 1st September 2013 new Government legislation gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

Unauthorised Absence

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy – a pupil is away from school without authority from the Headteacher. This includes parentally condoned absences
- Late after registration is closed (unless the parent/carer provides a legitimate reason for the absence)
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about
- Holiday

Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence are kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are absence concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Absence during the school day

Children arriving and leaving school with a parent/carer outside the normal hours must be signed in or out from the office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

It is expected that parents/carers will make medical appointments outside of school hours. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to attend appointments during term time. Evidence such as appointment cards should be shown.

Promoting Attendance

The schools will use the following strategies to promote the importance of attendance to parents:

- Information during the Induction Meetings for new parents.
- Information on the schools' websites
- Rewards for good attendance and punctuality
- Letters to inform parents of attendance and punctuality concerns and the need for improvement.
- Meetings with parents of pupils where there are attendance and punctuality concerns
- Attendance and Punctuality Improvement Agreements
- Individual attendance reports at the end of each year.

Penalty Notices for Non – School attendance

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty warnings and Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any 12-week period (Where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive a Penalty Warning or a Penalty Notice fine of £80 per parent, which must be paid within 21 days.

If payment is made after 28 days but within 42 days, the penalty is increased to £160. Where a fine remains unpaid after 42 days, the matter will be referred to the Borough Solicitor, who will consider instigating criminal proceedings.

From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.

If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.

If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

If you're taken to court

You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Tameside Education Welfare Service, in conjunction with schools and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance for the following reasons:

- If their child is stopped on a truancy sweep more than once
- If they go on holiday in term time (unless it is an exceptional circumstance agreed with the Headteacher)
- If they have not co-operated with the Education Welfare Service following a referral from school after they have taken steps to address the absences with the parent/carers and pupil
- If their child fails to return to school following a fixed term exclusion

Parents/carers are liable for a Penalty Notice for 10 sessions (5 days) plus unauthorised absences.

Children missing from education (CME)

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Staff monitor children that go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to the designated safeguarding lead.

In order to ensure accurate data is collected to allow effective safeguarding, the school will inform the LA of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. elective home education
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and we do not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Procedures

The Headteacher, Attendance Coordinator and Governor responsible for Safeguarding and Attendance meet regularly to discuss attendance.

The Attendance Coordinator provides daily updates to the Headteacher.

Full attendance reports are produced each term and attendance and punctuality are monitored for the latest calendar year.

Children who are on the Attendance or Punctuality Monitoring List will be closely monitored and reports produced more frequently.

Escalation of intervention

Attendance

The schools' target for attendance is 97%

If a pupil's attendance falls below 94% for the last calendar year

- A letter is sent home raising concern as to the child's attendance (**Appendix 1**)
- Support is offered to parents to help improve attendance
- Pupils are added to an Attendance Monitoring List and monitored closely for four weeks

If a pupil's attendance does not improve

- A meeting will be held between parents and a member of the SLT (**Appendix 2**)
- Targets will be set to improve attendance
- An Attendance Improvement Agreement (**Appendix 3**) will be set up between school, parents and the pupil
- Pupil's percentage attendance continues to be closely monitored

If a pupils attendance falls below 90% for the last calendar year - now classed as Persistent Absence

- A meeting will be held between parents and the Headteacher. A representative from the Education Welfare Service may be present (**Appendix 4**)
- Targets will be set to improve attendance through an Attendance Improvement Agreement
- A fixed penalty notice will be discussed
- The involvement of other agencies will be discussed

Punctuality

Following 10 late marks before register closes in a term

- A letter is sent home raising concerns (**Appendix 5**)
- Support is offered to parents to help improve punctuality
- Pupils will be added to a Punctuality Monitoring List and monitored closely for four weeks

If a pupil's punctuality does not improve

- A meeting will be held between parents and a member of the SLT (**Appendix 6**)
- Targets will be set to improve punctuality

- A Punctuality Improvement Agreement (**Appendix 7**) will be set up between school, parents and pupil
- Pupils punctuality continues to be closely monitored

If there is still no improvement

- Advice will be sought from the Education Welfare Service (**Appendix 8**)
- Targets will be set to improve punctuality through a Punctuality Improvement Agreement
- The involvement of other agencies will be discussed

Following 10 late marks after registers close

- A fixed penalty notice will be considered

Siblings

Information about attendance is shared between the Attendance Coordinators and SLTs of both schools.

In some cases, joint meetings will be held between parents, pupils and representatives from the Infant and Junior Schools. (**Appendix 9**)

Appendix 1 – 1st Attendance Letter



Date

Dear

This letter is to inform you that your child's attendance for the period ofto is%

In line with our attendance procedures this means that your child has now been placed on our Attendance Monitoring List and their attendance will be closely monitored for a period of four weeks.

We appreciate that there are usually sound reasons why children are absent. However, it is the school's duty to ensure that every child has a good attendance record.

This letter is also an offer of support and help if needed. I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss how improvements can be made.

Kind regards,

Appendix 2 – 2nd Attendance Letter



Date

Dear

As you are aware your child has been on our Attendance Monitoring List and has had their attendance monitored closely for four weeks.

Unfortunately, their attendance has not improved and is now at% for the period of to

In line with our attendance procedures this means that we now need to hold a meeting to discuss this further and set up an Attendance Improvement Agreement.

Please attend school on at

Kind regards,

Appendix 3 – Attendance Improvement Plan



Attendance Improvement Plan

Pupil		Current Attendance		%	
D.O.B		Parent Signature		Date	
School		SLT Signature		Date	
School Attendance Officer		Pupil Signature		Date	

Task	Person Responsible	Timescale	Desired Outcome	Comments (to be completed at review)

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Appendix 4 – 3rd Attendance Letter



Date

Dear

This letter is to inform you that your child's attendance for the period ofto
..... is%

In line with Government guidelines your child is now classed as a persistent absentee
and this must be addressed.

We have reported this to the Education Welfare Service who have advised that a
meeting should be called to discuss how improvements can be made.

Please attend school on at

A member of the Education Welfare Service may also be present at the meeting.

Kind regards,

Appendix 5 – 1st Punctuality Letter



Date

Dear

This letter is to inform you that your child has been late (before register closed) on occasions during the period of to

In line with our attendance procedures this means that your child has now been placed on our Punctuality Monitoring List and their punctuality will be closely monitored for a period of four weeks.

We understand that there can be exceptional circumstances which lead to lateness. However, it is the school's duty to ensure that every child has a good attendance and punctuality record.

This letter is also an offer of support and help if needed. I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss how improvements can be made.

Kind regards,

Appendix 6 – 2nd Punctuality Letter



Date

Dear

As you are aware your child has been on our Punctuality Monitoring List and has had their punctuality monitored closely for four weeks.

Unfortunately, their punctuality has not improved and they now have late marks for the period of to

In line with our attendance procedures this means that we now need to hold a meeting to discuss this further and set up a Punctuality Improvement Agreement.

Please attend school on at

Kind regards,

Appendix 7



Punctuality Improvement Plan

Pupil		Current Punctuality			
D.O.B		Parent Signature		Date	
School		SLT Signature		Date	
School Attendance Officer		Pupil Signature		Date	

Task	Person Responsible	Timescale	Desired Outcome	Comments (to be completed at review)

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Appendix 8 - 3rd Punctuality letter



Date

Dear

This letter is to inform you that your child's punctuality for the period ofto islate marks.

We have reported this to the Education Welfare Service who have advised that a meeting should be called to discuss how improvements can be made.

Please attend school on at

A member of the Education Welfare Service may also be present at the meeting.

Kind regards,

Appendix 9 – Sibling Letter



Date

Dear

Stalyhill Infant and Junior Schools work closely together to monitor attendance and punctuality.

The attendance / late marks (delete as appropriate) for your children from the period of to are:

Child

Child

We would like to invite you to a meeting on..... at to discuss how improvements can be made.

Kind regards,