

STYAL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

April 2023

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

In June 2013 the Department for Education (DfE) announced important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time.

From the 1st September 2013, **the new legislation does not give any entitlement to parents/ carers to take their child on holiday during term time.** Any application for leave of absence must be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave of absence. Parents/ carers can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

The reason for this policy is that there are only 190 days in a student's school year and it undermines the potential for achievement and socialisation if time is missed unnecessarily.

At Styal Primary School we work in partnership with parents / carers to ensure that children regularly attend school to ensure maximum benefit from the education we provide. Regular and punctual attendance is also regarded highly and forms an important aspect of a child's all-round social development.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make Styal Primary School a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Roles and Responsibilities

Under the terms of the 1944 education Act it is the duty of every parent/ carer to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Equally it is the role of the school to support attendance and to ensure that children derive the maximum benefits from that attendance, and to take seriously, any problems which may lead to non-attendance.

We recognise that for many reasons a child may not be able to attend school but within the framework of the 1994 Education Act only the school may 'authorise' the absence. There may be occasions where, due to lack of explanation or otherwise, the school will be unable to sanction the absence. This is to be regarded as 'unauthorised'.

The school recognises it has a duty to chase up unauthorised attendance and does so in a number of ways as described in this policy.

Safeguarding and attendance

Attending school every day reduces the chances of children and young people becoming vulnerable to harm. School has a responsibility to ensure a pupil is attending school. If they are not we have a duty to find out why not and where the child is. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. As a school we safeguard children and promote the welfare and future life opportunities for them by:

- expecting regular attendance to school
- having a clear Positive Behaviour Policy
- ensuring health and safety within the school
- having a clear Wellbeing Policy
- allowing them access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- having a clear Anti – Bullying Policy
- having a robust Safeguarding Policy

Reporting Absences

It is the parents' / carers' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. At Styal Primary School we expect parents / carers to notify school beforehand or, if unexpected, to contact us on the first day of absence before 9 am. This is clearly laid out in the school's prospectus.

When a parent / carer phones school, a note is made of the call with the reason for the child's absence recorded and the date a child is expected to return. This note is then filed in the class register and dispenses with the need for the parent / carer to write a note of explanation on the child's return to school.

Styal Primary School also has a 'phone home' policy if we have not heard from a parent / carer before 9.30 am. The class teacher notifies the school office if a child is absent without notification and a member of staff in the office will then contact home or phone the other contact numbers available on the child's school record.

Such a phone call usually takes the following form:

Hello, my name is ...

I'm phoning from Styal Primary School.

I understand that ... is not in school today and as we don't appear to have had a message from you, I thought I'd find out why and see if there is anything we can do at school to help.

As before, a note is made of this conversation and then the note filed in the class register.

The following procedures are in place for safeguarding:

- A minimum of 3 contacts to be held by school for each child/family whom we would be able to contact either in case of emergency or non-attendance.

- If we have not been notified of your child's absence from school by 9.30 am, a phone call will be made to the primary contacts. If we can't get through a voicemail will be left asking that you make contact with the school by 11 am.
- If we have still had no contact by 11am the school office will ring the third emergency contact.
- If we are still unable to make contact and have heard nothing by 1 pm a member of the Senior Leadership Team from Styal Primary School will visit the family home. If there is no answer then they will call the police.

This is to make sure your child is safe.

The Importance of Registration

Under regulation 3 of the Pupils' Registration regulations 1956, all schools must keep an attendance register on which at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 which amended the 1956 Regulations introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Both staff and children should see the taking of registers as an integral and key part of the school day. Careful attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

The registers are electronic. Computer print-outs of the register are printed each day, this forms the fire register. In the event of computer failure, the register is completed manually and is taken to the office via the box system.

Lateness

Punctuality is strongly encouraged. The whistle is blown at 8.50 and then the register is taken. At Styal Primary, children are expected to be in school for registration at this time. This is key as learning starts immediately and often intervention groups / 1:1 work can commence at this point. Children are also recording their dinner choices and organising their bags and coats. Arriving after other children has a negative impact on the start of the first lesson as these housekeeping items will need to be completed during a lesson and it stops the flow of teaching and impacts everyone's learning.

Any lateness is recorded if the child has to sign in at the office. If the signature is between 9.00 and 9.15am they will receive an L in the register for late. Any children arriving after that time are recorded as **unauthorised** unless there is a reasonable explanation for lateness. If lateness forms a pattern or becomes a problem parents are then reminded of the merits of their child(ren) arriving on time. Therefore, lateness after 9.15am can contribute to an unauthorised mark and a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Attendance Percentage	Day missed over an average school term (approximately)	Days missed over a school year (approximately)
100%	0	0

95%	3 ½	10
90%	6 ½	20
85%	10	30

Late Collection of Children at the End of the Day

We ask parents / carers to call the school office if they are running late to help appropriate provision to be made and children can be kept informed and reassured (please note that calling will not exempt a parent from late charges).

At the end of the school day, teachers will take any uncollected children to the office to wait for collection. On many days, teachers have professional development or professional meetings and cannot look after children who are not collected on time. Because of the additional administrative and supervision costs, there is a late collection charge from After School Club.

If children are not collected at the end of the day, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Messages are checked to see if there are any changes to the end of day arrangements
- Parents / carers are contacted at home or work
- If this is unsuccessful, other authorised adults and emergency contacts are contacted

If the child is not collected after **15 minutes**, the child will be taken to our After School Club in the hall for which parents / carers will be charged **the relevant fee by After School Club**.

Parents / carers will be asked to sign a **Late Collection of Child Incident Form** on pick-up. (See Appendix 3) This log will be reviewed weekly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the child has not been collected after one hour (and the three contacts of the child are not responding to calls), we will follow our safeguarding procedures and contact social services.

Early Pick Up From School Before 3.30pm

Parents / carers should email the headteacher for early pick up requests. Please provide copies of appointment cards / appointment letters.

Categories of Attendance

Authorised Absence Illness, medical and dental appointments
Special circumstances such as bereavement
Religious observance
Residential visit
Public performance, music exams

Attendance at another school eg to sit exam
Traveller family travelling away from home
Temporary exclusion

Unauthorised Absence Lateness i.e. arriving after 9.15am
Truancy
Weddings
Accompanying family members to a medical appointment
Illness that would not stop them attending school
Taking a full day for a medical appointment
Minding the house, looking after other children or parent
Family holidays
Oversleeping, getting up late
Shopping during school hours

Teachers use the attached list of abbreviations to indicate the category of absence (see Appendix 1).

Intervention for Poor Attendance

We monitor children whose attendance is below 95% (school target) and 90% (classed as persistent absence). This involves checking the register and monitoring reasons for absence. This helps us to understand the barriers to attendance such as illness and family issues. Families can be asked for doctor's notes where poor attendance is an issue.

Persistent Absence

It is our policy to intervene if a child's attendance is below 95% (in the first instance) and then 90% then this will be classed as persistent absence. The child's attendance will be recorded at 4 weekly intervals.

The following procedures will be followed:

1. Initially, parents will be informed by letter that attendance is below 95% and then below 90%
2. If no improvement is seen after four weeks, parents / carers will be asked to attend a meeting with the headteacher to discuss attendance.
3. Regular monthly meetings will continue with the Senior Leadership Team until attendance improves.
4. An Early Help Assessment may be discussed with parents. Every effort will be made to address any barriers to attendance. Attendance is expected to improve.
5. If attendance still fails to improve after a further four weeks, parents will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher and the local authority attendance team.
6. The local authority reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. If there is no improvement, parents may be issued with a fine / Fixed Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised Absence – Fixed Penalty Notices

Parents / carers should be aware that Styal Primary School has a duty to inform the local authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term (**5 school days**), with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent or carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school regardless of whether parents live together.

Application for Exceptional Circumstances

Styal Primary School asks for parents / carers to notify the school of absence in advance. The headteacher may not grant leave of absence in term time unless they are exceptional circumstances. If you continue with your plans and take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The school must then inform the local authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. Failure to pay the penalty fine within the required time may result in prosecution.

Penalties paid to the Local Authority for Unauthorised Absence		
Timeline	One Child	Two Children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£120 per parent
After 21 days but before 28 days	£120 per parent	£240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before a Magistrate's Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

Long-term absence

If the absence is a planned one e.g. following an operation, we would be happy to work with parents to ensure that their child is supported upon their return to school. In certain circumstances we can make reasonable adaptations so that their needs can be catered for.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services such as the Early Intervention Team (previously known as 'Educational Welfare Officer') and/ or Hospital Teaching for advice regarding how to support a child.

Occasionally school may be able to offer a part time timetable in order to ease a child back into school particularly after an extended absence for ill health.

It is important that parents and school work together in these cases so that the child does not develop anxiety around returning to school. If necessary we have the support of the Emotional Wellbeing Team to assist.

Admittance into School

By law children must attend school from the start of the term following their fifth birthday. However, children reaching the age of five years between September 1st and August 31st are generally admitted into school earlier than the law requires i.e. at the start of September in the Autumn term.

At Styal Primary School this is standard practice. All children start together in September as one cohort.

Published Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

All schools are now obliged to record and publish the number of authorised and unauthorised absences. The rates of absence at Styal are included on in the dashboard for parent link (DFE).

Equal Opportunities

Fundamental to the aims of the school being achieved is a belief that all parents and children will receive equal entitlement without prejudice and that individual potential should be developed to the full.

We do not discriminate against any child or adult because of gender, age, ethnic origin, social class, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or special needs.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed every two years by the Headteacher in consultation with staff and governors.

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The Governing Board also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The rates of attendance will be reported through relevant Governor's sub-committees and at the full Governor Board meeting each term.

The link governor for attendance is Natalie Grandison.

The Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring attendance and attendance patterns. He/she reports attendance / punctuality data to Governors termly.

This policy was reviewed by the Headteacher in consultation with staff and

governors in April 2023 and adopted by the Governing Body.

Signed: Lee Walsh

Name: April 2023

APPENDIX 1

SYMBOLS FOR MARKING CLASS REGISTER

Codes for a COVID related absence:

I01	Illness
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19
X02	Self-isolating COVID-19 symptoms
X05	Quarantine requirement
X06	Shielding
X07	Government attendance restrictions
X08	Advised by Public Health Directors not to attend school
X09	NHS test and trace required self-isolation

Authorised Absence (zero with appropriate code within it)

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.

The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	Where possible, use one of the other codes to enable reporting on your Covid-19 Dashboard. This code can be used for illness not covered by the codes above.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. Students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.

The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.

These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence or covid-related absence	Where possible, use one of the other codes to enable reporting on your Covid-19 Dashboard. This code can also be used for any covid-related absences not covered by the codes below (after confirming with the DfE).
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.
X01	Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to be in school	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
X02	Self-isolating COVID-19 symptoms	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Students self-isolating because they have symptoms of coronavirus but they have not yet had a positive test.
X05	Quarantine requirement	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Student required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK.
X06	Shielding	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Students who have been identified as clinically vulnerable and advised that they should not attend school.
X07	Government attendance restrictions	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. To be used for national restrictions to education settings in line with Government advice.
X08	Advised by Public Health Directors not to attend school	To be used for local restrictions to education settings in line with advice from Directors of Public Health.
X09	NHS test and trace required self-isolation	The student is required to self-isolate due to contact with a confirmed case, by NHS test and trace.

Appendix 2 - Letters

1. Letter Declining Requested Leave of Absence

Dear (parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your request for permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school from to

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school Governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are not exceptional. Therefore, if your child is away from school during this period it will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised and extends more than 10 sessions (5 days) in a term.

The Penalty Notice fine would be:

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £2,500 or imprisonment. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our key priority is to ensure your child(ren) are as successful as possible, are able to reach his/her full potential and gains maximum benefits from his/her educational experience.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

(Name)
Headteacher

2. Letter Authorising Requested Leave of Absence

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school from to

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school Governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.**

Our key priority is to ensure that your child(ren) are as successful as possible and are able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would therefore ask that you support your child in catching up on the time they will miss in school.

Yours sincerely

(Name)
Headteacher

3. Letter for Attendance Below 90% or Below 95%

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below 90% and is currently _____. I am sure you are aware how important it is that all children maintain a good attendance in order for them to achieve their full potential in all areas of their learning and therefore ask for your support to ensure their attendance improves.

What does your child's percentage attendance mean?

Below is guidance as to how absence impacts upon attendance each term and over the year.

Attendance Percentage	Day missed over an average school term (approximately)	Days missed over a school year (approximately)
100%	0	0
95%	3 ½	10
90%	6 ½	20
85%	10	30

Please contact me to discuss whether you would like school to support you in any way e.g by requesting a medical assessment of your child's health by the school nurse.

Yours sincerely

(Name)
Headteacher

4. Letter for Attendance Below 90% and Requesting Meeting with Headteacher

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below 90% and is currently _____ which is of concern. I am sure that you are aware that attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence and may result in involvement from the local authority.

In order to ensure that we work together to improve your child's attendance I would like you to attend a meeting with me at _____ on _____.

At this meeting we will be able to look in detail at your child's attendance pattern and agree on a way forward to ensure that we see this figure improve.

If you are unable to attend the meeting stated above please contact the office to arrange a more suitable date and time. I am happy to accommodate work commitments and can meet outside of the school day if requested.

Yours sincerely

(Name)
Headteacher

5. Letter for Attendance Below 90% and Requesting Meeting with Headteacher and Local Authority Attendance Team

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below 90% and is now classed as persistent absence. Their current attendance figure is _____.

Local authority guidelines are very clear as to process that needs to be adhered to when attendance falls below this figure.

I would therefore like you to attend a meeting with me **and the local authority** at _____ on _____.

At this meeting we will be able to look in detail at your child's attendance pattern and I will share with you detailed guidance as to what this now means for you and your child.

If you are unable to attend the meeting stated above please contact the office to arrange a more suitable date and time. I am happy to accommodate work commitments and can meet outside of the school day if requested.

Yours sincerely

(Name)
Headteacher

Appendix 3
Late Collection of Child Incident Form

Late Collection of Child Incident Form



Stylal Primary School



Child	Date	Pick-up Time	Fee	Reason for late collection	Parent / carer signature