

Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE Primary School

has adopted and adapted this LA policy

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Status	Date
Date Adopted by Governing Body:	4 th March 2021
To be reviewed:	Spring Term 2024

Stockton Council Attendance Team fulfils the statutory duty and responsibilities of the local authority in relation to school attendance. The attendance team promote and enforce regular attendance at school for all children of statutory school age in Stockton and work in partnership across agencies.

Stockton Council absence procedures ensure schools and the local authority provide support and challenge to parents/carers and pupils to afford children of Stockton to take advantage of the best possible educational opportunities available to them.

If a parent/carer of a child registered at a Stockton school fails to meet their parental responsibility in ensuring their child's regular school attendance, then legal action may be taken.

Stockton Council's absence procedures outline the actions schools and the local authority will take to support and enforce the child's attendance at school.

Stage 1 – School Level Intervention

- School will follow their own internal school attendance procedures. This will include first day response, letters to parent(s)/carer where attendance is becoming a concern, discussions with the pupil, home visits to speak with parent(s)/carer in attempt to resolve issues and remind parent(s)/carer of their responsibility in ensuring their child's attendance at school.
- In our school once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol on the computer records.
- We expect that parents and carers will contact the school by telephone and report the reason for absence on the first day of absence before 9am. Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA Primary School operates a first day calling system. If we have not received a reason for absence by 9am on the first day of absence a member of school staff will contact the home contact number to try to ascertain the reason for absence. If the absence continues to the second day then all contact information will be used to attempt to discuss the absence with the parent.
- The school office staff will record all notes and notes of telephone messages and a note of any verbal explanations on the SIMS registration tool.
- Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the school need take no action beyond recording the fact that (for the purpose of emergency evacuation) the pupil, although registered, is not physically present. Similarly the school must note the presence of a pupil (again for purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment. We ask parents and carers to record this on the relevant form in our school offices. A member of office staff will make a note in the relevant day's column in the register as to the times the child came or left so that there is information on the child's whereabouts in the event of emergency evacuation.
- An Early Help Assessment will be completed when, despite the efforts of school, attendance is becoming an issue, to assist the parent(s)/carer and pupil with any issues. Other services should be considered and referred to as relevant. Examples include EP Service, SEN Team, Early Help Team, Youth Direction, School Health, Preventions, Social Care for Family Support.
- Where a pupil's absence continues following letters and home visit(s), a member of school staff should invite the parent(s)/carer into school to an attendance improvement support planning meeting.
- This meeting should be recorded and minutes produced detailing the discussion, the key issues/barriers to attendance, actions that each member will take to resolve the issues and an attendance target set. The attendance improvement plan should run for no less than 4 school weeks. Parent(s)/carer should receive a copy of the minutes from this meeting. A review date should be set and agreed with parents.
- During the attendance improvement support plan meeting, school staff should detail how contact with the parent and pupil will take place and who will make the contact. This may be a weekly support meeting, a home visit or if this is not feasible, a telephone contact as a minimum. It is advisable that from this meeting, further absences are unauthorised unless evidence is provided to school to inform that the absence is for a serious and unavoidable reason. If the absence is for reasons of illness, acceptable medical evidence that should be considered is: prescription slip, sight of medication prescribed by the GP, note/letter from the GP, medical or dental appointment letter, evidence that the pupil was sent home from school too ill to remain in school. In these instances, the absence for the day the child was sent home should be authorised and a common sense approach taken for any further related subsequent absence.

- Parent(s)/carer should be made aware that continuing unauthorised absences can result in a referral to the local authority attendance team.
- On review, the school should decide to extend the attendance improvement support plan, make a referral to the local authority for legal proceedings to commence, or end the attendance improvement support plan if absence is no longer an issue.

Holidays in Term Time

Parents and carers do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for holidays in term time. The Pupil Registration Regulations state that Head Teachers should NOT grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances.

Parents and carers are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time due to the disruption and impact of the missed education on the child.

If parents and carers feel that exceptional circumstances apply to their family then they should complete an Absence Form, which they may obtain from the offices, if they intend to remove their child from school for this purpose. It should be completed and returned to the school office who will send it to the Head Teacher for individual consideration. The parent will receive written notification as to whether the holiday absence is granted. Unauthorised holidays with a minimum absence of 10 sessions (5 school days) will be referred in to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued following the Local Authority "Penalty notice code of conduct and procedures for attendance and exclusion".

The Local Authority threshold for referral is 10 unauthorised absence sessions in the previous eight school weeks period.

Punctuality

It is Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE VA School's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the school office.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to keep the Head Teacher informed. Further action may be taken if there is no valid reason for this lateness.

Attendance Procedures

The Head Teacher will prioritise the list of pupils to be referred to the Attendance and Exclusion Team. These circumstances include:

- (i) When Holy Trinity Rosehill Primary CofE VA School, despite several attempts by phone and also by letter, is unable to make contact with the parent.
- (ii) If attendance has fallen below 90% and the absence is unauthorised.
- (iii) When school has offered all support available but attendance fails to improve.

- (iv) When the school has reason not to accept the parents and carers justification for absence on a regular basis.

Stage 2 - Local Authority Attendance Team Intervention.

Referrals to the team are accepted when:

- School completes the Stage 1 process.
- Unauthorised absences continue.
- The documentation to evidence completion of Stage 1 interventions by school is provided with the referral form.
- The referral threshold is met (10 unauthorised sessions in the previous 8 school weeks).

It is good practice to inform the parent(s)/carer that a referral has been made to the local authority attendance team.

All referrals should be accompanied by the following supporting evidence:

- Copies of letters to parent(s)/carer
- Details of home visits – dates, outcomes
- Copy of school's attendance improvement support plan
- Copy of the Early Help Assessment and details of review (provide reason if this is not in place)
- Up to date attendance printout
- Details of other agency involvement
- Fully completed referral form
- Details of person/s with parental responsibility
- Signed and dated by the head teacher.

On receipt of all the relevant paperwork, a fully completed referral form and an attendance printout displaying recent unauthorised absence, the attendance team will action the referral within 10 school days.

The attendance team will make a decision to either:

- (A) Follow Stockton local authority penalty notice procedure **or**
- (B) Arrange an Attendance Case Conference

Penalty Notice Procedure

- A penalty notice warning letter will be issued by the local authority to the parent(s)/carers named on the referral form outlining their parental responsibility. The warning letter advises the parent(s)/carer the child should return to school immediately with regular daily attendance.
- The warning letter will cover a 4 week monitoring period and no further unauthorised absence is expected during this time. Evidence to cover absences must be provided by the parent(s)/carer.
- At the end of the 4 week monitoring period, the attendance officer will review the pupil's school attendance. If the target has been met (no unauthorised absences in the 4 week monitoring period) the case will be closed and passed back to school level monitoring.
- If unauthorised absences continue, a penalty notice will be issued to the parent(s)/carer named on the referral form.
- In cases of non-payment, the local authority will consider prosecuting the parent(s)/carer in the magistrate court.
- Parent(s)/carers may not be issued with more than 2 penalty notices in a 12 month period.

Attendance Case Conference

- If parent(s)/carer have been prosecuted previously for failing to ensure their child's attendance, an Attendance Case Conference will be convened.
- A warning letter will be issued to the parent(s)/carer detailing their parental responsibility and outlining the local authority's consideration of prosecution in the magistrate court if unauthorised absences continue.
- The local authority attendance officer will contact school staff to arrange an Attendance Case Conference.
- Once the attendance case conference has been arranged, a letter will be sent to the parent(s)/carer inviting them to attend to the meeting. If other professionals are involved with the family, they will also be invited to the meeting.
- A parenting contract and a 6 week attendance plan will be negotiated and put in place at the meeting. The parent(s)/carer will be cautioned according to PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, PACE).
- The attendance officer will visit the parent(s)/carer within one week of the meeting to deliver the minutes and parenting contract. The parent(s)/carer will be invited to sign the parenting contract. All parties will be asked to sign the contract: school representative, parent, pupil, and local authority attendance officer.
- Further home visits will be made at least fortnightly during the period of the plan to offer advice and support to the parent and pupil.
- On review, if the attendance target set at the attendance case conference is achieved, a further 4 week monitoring period will take place. The attendance officer will maintain contact with the parent(s)/carer and pupil during this period. If targets continue to be met, the case will be closed and passed back to school level monitoring.
- If new information becomes available to the attendance officer during the intervention that suggests the family circumstances have changed or a significant need emerges relating to the family, then it may be appropriate to return to attendance case conference to ensure the plan is fit for purpose.
- If the targets set at the attendance case conference meeting are not met then the local authority will consider prosecuting the parent(s)/carer in the magistrate court.

Stage 3 Legal Process

- The case file of intervention will be reviewed and authorisation sought from the Attendance and Safeguarding Manager.
- Papers and witness statements will be prepared and sent to Stockton Council's Law and Democracy Department to obtain a summons from the Magistrate Court.
- An attendance certificate detailing the period of prosecution signed by the head teacher is required and will be requested by the attendance officer to accompany the paperwork sent to the solicitor prosecuting on behalf of the local authority from the Law and Democracy Department.
- In some circumstances, school staff may also be asked to provide witness statements and appear in court as a witness for the prosecution where a not guilty plea is entered by the parent(s)/carer.

Following Prosecution

- If the pupil's school attendance has improved, the case will be passed back to school for school level monitoring and should unauthorised absences reoccur, then the school should commence their school attendance procedures.
- If unauthorised absences continue, the attendance officer will arrange a post court attendance case conference. If the parent(s)/carers received a disposal from the magistrates court that is suspended, the parent should be aware that a subsequent prosecution within the time period of the suspended disposal will result in that disposal being imposed along with additional sentencing for the current offence.

In certain circumstances and if deemed necessary, consideration will be given to changing the attendance officer working with the family.

Schools should follow their Safeguarding Procedures for first day response throughout this process.

Procedures for promoting good attendance

School support

- First day calling to obtain a reason and an expected return date.
- Meeting with a member of staff to discuss any issues and overcome any barriers.
- Offer advice and sign-posting to different agencies and professionals e.g. school nurse.
- Attendance support plans/Early Intervention initiatives/Home visits/Early Help Assessment referral

Consecutive absences due to illness

First day of absence:

- First day calling to obtain reason for absence and expected return date.
- Absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided by the parent(s)/carer.
- If the expected date of return is 5 days, parents and carers are informed that they need to seek medical advice as 10 sessions (5 days) absence, without medical evidence, could result in in-school attendance procedures.
- If contact cannot be made a home visit will be made by (at least) two members of staff (one will be from the SLT). If there are Safeguarding concerns the Children's Hub will be contacted 01429 284284.

Expected date of return:

- If the child does not return on the expected date, school to contact the parent again to obtain the reason why.
- Parent(s)/carer will be informed verbally that they should seek medical advice or further medical advice.
- If absence continues, parent(s)/carer to be invited to a meeting with a member of staff

Monthly monitoring

- Letters are to be sent to the parent(s)/carer of children who have below 92% attendance outlining the importance of good attendance and the support we can offer.

Attendance support plans

- These will last for 4 weeks and outline responsibilities of parents and carers and school support. Any absence in this period, without medical evidence, will result in a referral.
- Parents and carers will not be put on a plan more than twice in an academic year.

REASON FOR REFERRAL							
OTHER AGENCIES/PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED							
	AGENCY	WORKER	TEL. NO.		AGENCY	WORKER	TEL. NO.
<input type="checkbox"/>	EPS			<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMHS		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Early Help			<input type="checkbox"/>	YOS		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Support			<input type="checkbox"/>	Preventions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Care			<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth Direction		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inclusion Team			<input type="checkbox"/>	Police/Antisocial		
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Nurse			<input type="checkbox"/>	Alliance		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eastern Ravens			<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing		
<input type="checkbox"/>	GP			<input type="checkbox"/>	Other		
PARENT/CARER							
Has parent engaged? Y/N		Details:					
Are you aware of any concerns with regard to carrying out home visits? Y/N		Details:					
<p>Name of Referrer/School Contact:</p> <p>I confirm this is an accurate record of’s attendance</p> <p>I agree the Local Authority will give consideration to the issue of a penalty notice warning letter: Y/N</p> <p>Signature of Head Teacher/Principal Date</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please note: If this referral form is incomplete or relevant information is not attached, it will be returned to school</i></p>							
<p>PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: Attendance Team Education Improvement Service EDC@SSFC Stockton Sixth Form College Bishopton Road West Stockton-on-Tees TS19 0QD attendance.team@stockton.gov.uk</p>							

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date received:	Referral accepted: Y/N