



## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

At Stanford in the Vale CE Primary School, we aim for everybody to flourish in a loving community by 'working together to achieve together', with all achieving their individual potential to be the best they can be through the values of Love, Hope and Community. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

### Legislation & Guidance

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) are required to receive an education. It is a parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child has an education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have.

Whilst compulsory school age is between 5 and 16, all parents who choose Stanford in the Vale CE Primary School for Foundation are expected to comply with the guidance set out in this Attendance Policy.

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.

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### Roles and responsibilities

Statutory responsibilities for parents/carers, schools, governing bodies and local authorities are laid out in the summary guide of the DfE's 'Working Together to Improve Attendance' document. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### **The Governing Board**

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Safeguarding Governor has a key role in the monitoring of attendance procedures at the school.

They will:

- Monitor the school's procedures for managing pupil attendance (inc. training, procedures and data management)
- Annually review the attendance policy in line with the latest guidanceThe governing board is responsible for:



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### The Head Teacher (Attendance Lead)

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Effective implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Reviewing leave of absence requests and authorising the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Maintaining oversight/authorisation of the removal from roll for any pupils (inc. elective home education requests) and part time timetable arrangements
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### The Admin Officer

The School Admin Officer is responsible for:

- Monitors attendance & lateness data across the school and at an individual pupil level and ensures appropriate completion/reconciliation of daily attendance registers
- Promotes a culture of attendance matters through effective communication with all stakeholders
- Reports concerns about attendance/absence (inc. persistent absence) to the Head Teacher
- Works with local authority education welfare officers & attendance support services to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

The admin/attendance officer is Ms Emma Payne and can be contacted via 01367 710474 / office.3240@stanford.oxon.sch.uk

### Class Teachers

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

They will:

- Ensure registers are completed and submitted by 9.00am and 1.00pm every day.
- Report any concerns relating to attendance to the Head Teacher
- Discuss attendance with parents/carers during parents evening appointments



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### School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls/messages from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Record any children who arrive late or leave early on the clipboard in the front office, including reasons why.

### Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers have a key role to play, with legal responsibilities attached, in order to ensure regular attendance for their child at school. They will:

- Plan holidays outside of term time
- Ensure their child attends school regularly in accordance with the Home School agreement
- Seek to arrange any medical appointments outside of the school day hours
- Make sure their child attends every day on time, for the whole school day
- Call the school on 01367 710474 to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence (please do not report via Class Dojo)
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

### Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

### Recording attendance

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and after the lunchtime break. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day. Gates are open between 8.40am – 8.55am to allow flexi- drop off. If a pupil arrives after this time, they will need to enter via the main entrance and will be marked as Late in the attendance register. Registers close promptly at 9.05am. Therefore, if a child arrives in school after this time, they will be marked as absent for the session.



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If a child is not able to be present for their attendance mark, due to illness or a medical appointment (which cannot be made outside of school hours), evidence will be requested, e.g. hospital or GP letter. Where a child has a medical appointment in school hours, they are expected to return to school immediately after this if they are well enough to do so.

The register for the second session will be taken immediately after lunch (1.00pm) at the start of the afternoon lessons.

Punctuality will be monitored closely alongside attendance and action for unauthorised absences, due to arriving late after the register has closed, will be the same as an unauthorised session. If children are collected before the end of the day (3.10pm/3.15pm), their afternoon session may be marked as unauthorised and further action could be taken.

### **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff on 01367 710474. Parents/carers should not report absences to a child's class teacher via Class Dojo or via another parent/carers or pupil. It is important that the office is informed directly from somebody who has parental responsibility for the child not attending school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness and/or evidence requested has not been provided.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or a pupil has had a significant amount of absence due to ill health, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Where an absence hasn't been reported, parents/carers will be contacted during the morning requesting a response and reason for absence.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence of the appointment such as a GP slip or letter, appointment card or letter, the original prescribed medication or the prescription itself.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. If an appointment is unavoidable, siblings must not be taken out of school. If they are taken out of school, this would be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Parents/carers should note that not all illnesses or injuries require a child to be absent from school. Further information about whether an illness requires time off from school or not can be found on the NHS website: <http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school>

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code



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If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. Where there is no improvement, further action could be taken or the case escalated.

### **Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence by 9.30am to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the home, take advice from the local authority – attendance team or contact [childrenmissingeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk), or ring the police.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

### **Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform all parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly reports.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unavoidable circumstances.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence via [headteacher.3240@stanford.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher.3240@stanford.oxon.sch.uk). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (evidence of appointments is required)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils 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, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday



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Family weddings or funerals

Taking part in national and international sporting competitions

Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil

Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil

Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery

Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take leave to suit

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body are within their rights to decline a request and refuse permission for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time. Such a decision will have been made in the best interest of the pupils' educational progress and attainment and with due regard to their previous attendance record. If the child is subsequently taken out of school this absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. The Head Teacher's decision is final and there is no right of appeal with the decisions taken.

Parents/carers who take their children out of school during term time without the authorisation of the Head teacher not only damage their children's educational opportunities but also risk being issued with a penalty notice, being prosecuted in court and losing the child's place at the school.

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices may be issued to parents/carers by Oxfordshire County Council, on behalf of the school, for any unauthorised absences of 10 or more sessions (5 or more days) in any 25 day period, including, but not limited to, absences for term-time holidays, sporadic unauthorised absences or illness where supporting medical evidence has been requested by the school but not supplied by the parent/carers.

During the 25 day period, the school will attempt to make at least three points of contact (i.e. phone, letter or home visit). If, at any point, there are safeguarding concerns (i.e. we are not able to locate a child or make contact) then, we may have no option but to make a referral to Children's Services and/or the police. This could also result in a referral to the Child Missing Education (CME) team. Therefore, it is always important to maintain contact when children are absent. Furthermore, these attempts at contact demonstrate that a referral for a penalty notice or prosecution really are a last resort.

The amount of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid the parent/carer may be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Any parents/carers with parental responsibility, even if they are currently living at a different address, may also be liable.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated half termly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Letters are sent to parents of children whose attendance falls below 96%, who are persistently late or who show a pattern of days off.

Each term certificates are given to those children who have achieved 96%+ attendance, with certificates and badges given to those with 100% attendance. At the end of the year medals are also given for 100%



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attendance of the whole academic year. The children will be celebrated in our school newsletter and on the attendance page of our school website.

Every week, the class with the best attendance is awarded the Attendance Teddy in our Friday celebration assembly and named on the school website.

### **Attendance monitoring**

#### **Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

#### **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

#### **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

#### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence and send letters home to relevant parents

Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

Work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils and parents to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families through a parenting contract;



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Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners. This is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment and Team Around the Family meetings. These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future.

Where voluntary support has not been effective, we will work with the local authority to intensify support through possible Education supervision orders, statutory children's social care involvement or prosecution.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by Amanda Willis, the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

Adopted: September 2022

Next Review: September 2023

### **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

<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





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<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
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Code	Definition	Scenario
<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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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<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