

# Stephenson Way Academy and Nursery School

## ***Attendance Policy***

### ***OUR STATEMENT***

- Stephenson Way Academy and Nursery School aims to ensure all its pupils receive a full-time education to enhance and maximise opportunities for every pupil to realise their true potential.
- All pastoral care staff will work with pupils and their families / carers to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.
- The school will use effective systems for both incentives and rewards for good and improved attendance in order to acknowledge the efforts of pupils to sustain good attendance and improve their attendance.
- Our school will challenge the behaviour and attitudes of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- To achieve this we will maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual advice, information and support.
- We will also develop effective data tracking systems, so that we always have an up-to-date picture of attendance figures, patterns of poor attendance and evidence of improving attendance for all pupils and groups of pupils.
- We will also publish attendance data on our school website.
- The school will send a 'letter of concern' to parents of children with poor attendance.
- The school will work closely with the county's attendance improvement team in circumstances of poor attendance.

### **School Attendance Policy and Procedure.**

The attendance of pupils at Stephenson Way Academy and Nursery School is of vital importance. If pupils do not attend school regularly their learning is fragmented, their skills and knowledge development is interrupted and their educational achievements are potentially damaged. Our school will work with the LEA and other appropriate agencies and partners to promote the highest possible levels of regular school attendance.

*The following LA principles provide our basis of school support:*

- That all pupils have a fundamental right to access education to and achieve their maximum potential.
- That regular attendance will be best secured when all partners have clearly expressed and understood their roles and responsibilities.
- That all partners need to work together and actively promote and support the fundamental importance of school attendance.
- That parents and carers should be involved as key partners in securing school attendance.
- That early identification, communication and action on attendance problems are critical in

achieving successful outcomes.

### **Statutory Framework**

**The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance / absence figures to parents. “Social Inclusion: Pupil Support DFES circular 10/99**

#### *Section 7 Education Act 1996*

It is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him or her to receive efficient full time education suitable to:

- a) his / her age and aptitude, and;
- b) any special educational needs he / she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

#### *Section 437 Education Act 1996*

It is the LA's duty to serve a School Attendance order on the parent of a child of compulsory school age living in their area, who fails to prove that the child is receiving suitable education and the authority is of the opinion that the child should attend school.

#### *Section 446 Education Act 1996*

It is the LA's duty to institute proceeding under sections 443 and 444 of the Education Act 1996 in respect of parents failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

### **Roles and Responsibilities.**

#### ***Parents***

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the responsibility for ensuring that children attend school lies with the parents. It is therefore vital that parents co-operate with the school and the LA by complying with absence procedures and by making all reasonable efforts to ensure their child (ren) attend school regularly and punctually.

#### ***Our School***

- Registration – law requires school to maintain two registers; an admission register which serves as a school roll and an attendance register. These must be kept up to date and accurate.
- Marking the Attendance register – The register will be called twice a day. Entries will be made in accordance with school guidelines. In addition to the register the pupil attendance records are entered onto the attendance module of SIMS, allowing for the coding of specific absences and monitoring of attendance.
- Security and preservation of the register – the register is a legal document and should be kept securely for a period of 3 years following the last entry.
- Removal of registered pupils from the school roll – Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 as amended, specifies the grounds for removal from the school roll of pupils of compulsory school age.
- Reporting absences to the LEA – the school must inform the LEA at regular agreed intervals of the name, address and relevant details of any registered pupil who:
  - o Fails to attend school regularly.
  - o Develops a pattern of absences, or
  - o Has been absent for ten consecutive school days or more, giving the cause for concern if known.

School is exempt from doing this if the absence:

- Is covered by a medical certificate.
- Has been authorised by school, or
- Is part of a dual registration agreement.

School must make reasonable efforts in establishing reasons for absence. Procedures

for establishing reasons as follows:

- When a child is absent and we don't know why, the office will text out to parents. If we don't get a reply, we either text again or make a phone call to parents. Parents are asked to contact us on the first day of a child's absence.
- If a child is late for school twice in one week, we text out to parents. If we have to text parents about lateness more than once in a month we will usually ask to meet with parents.
- If attendance or lateness is becoming a concern, the school will send out a 'Letter of Concern', which invites parents to contact the school for support, and outlines next steps should attendance or lateness not improve.

### ***Reporting attendance / absence rates to DFE.***

In addition to the class register, individual pupil attendance / records are transferred to pupil database on SIMS.net. This information is used to report compulsory school age attendance / absence rates as statutorily required.

### ***LA***

The LA has a duty to enforce the parent's legal responsibility in relation to school attendance and this is delegated to the School Improvement Team. This may involve legal action where appropriate, including legal proceedings under Section 444 (1), and / or 444(1a) Education Act 1996, or penalty notices under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

### ***Governors***

School governors will monitor the schools performance and discuss progress, concerns and initiatives with the Head at regular intervals. Schools may appoint a Governor to monitor attendance.

### **Procedure for School Attendance**

#### ***Marking the Register.***

Registers are called at the beginning of the morning and afternoon school sessions. They will be marked promptly and accurately by an appropriate member of staff.

Pupils must be marked as either.

- Present.
- Absent (if a pupil of compulsory school age is absent the register will show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised)
- The office will record the reason for absence when provided by parent / carer.
  - The office will record in SIMS whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

#### ***Pupils present at registration***

An oblique stroke will record a present mark, with a stroke in the reverse direction of the afternoon session.

### ***Pupils absent at registration***

It is crucial that staff complete the register accurately and consistently.

- Authorised – where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent, or has accepted the explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for absence (school do not have to accept a reason if it has reasonable grounds to doubt) if there is doubt with the validity of the reason provided for absence on medical grounds then a referral to school nurse will be made for further investigation. Details of this must be documented.
- All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.

### ***When establishing whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised school will consider:***

- Whether or not parents have sent a note, made a pre arranged request, telephoned school.
- In the absence of such evidence school should consider whether the school have made reasonable efforts to establish a reason for absence from the family home via a telephone call, sending a standard letter, or inviting parents to school to discuss school attendance.

### **LATENESS**

- School starts at 8:50am each day.
- A pupil will be considered late if they arrive to school after 9am. This is because it can take 10 minutes for classes to line up, walk into school, store their coats and packed lunches and begin lessons.
- If a pupil arrives after 9am, they are given a late mark (L code). If multiple L codes are recorded in a short amount of time (2 in any one week) then a text is sent out to parents. Following this, letters of concern, the use of U codes and referral to the attendance improvement team may be necessary.
- U codes are used mainly for children who have been referred to the attendance improvement team for their lateness or attendance or where lateness is becoming a persistent problem.

### **Attendance Issues**

#### ***B - Education Off Site***

Pupils receiving education off site will be marked with a 'B' unless they have attended registration on the school premises. Pupils leaving the site to attend education provided on another site will sign in and out at reception to ensure that there is an accurate record of their whereabouts. .

#### ***Absences that may be treated as authorised.***

##### **M – Medical, illness and dental appointments.**

Needs only to be used when a pupil misses the whole session. School may use 'L' if they arrive late after a medical appointment (must ensure the reason is recorded in SIMS)

##### **E – Excluded.**

School will include all fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions until the representation procedures have been completed. For those pupils who are secluded (temporarily excluded from class but educated at another base), an unused code may be used unless it is determined that the Educated off site (as follows).

##### **C – Other authorised circumstances.**

This covers all absences where the Head teacher has granted "leave" and the absence is not covered elsewhere (e.g. transport problems, bereavement, family problems, wedding, funeral, or where the LEA has granted leave for a public performance)

## **H – Holiday during term time (agreed by Head)**

Parents do NOT have the right to take pupils on holiday in term time.

However a request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking into account the age of the child: the time of year of the trip, the nature of the trip the attendance pattern and the child's educational progress.

If the head does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday absence is unauthorised.

The school will only agree absence for holiday in exceptional circumstances and does not regard 10 days as the norm. School will not authorise holidays during SATS periods under any circumstances.

### ***Enforced school closure***

If school is forced to close due to severe weather conditions, fire or structural damage, no pupil attendance is required and will be recorded accordingly.

### ***Deleting pupils from the admissions register.***

The rules when school can delete pupils from their admissions register are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil registration) Regulations 1995.

If a pupil is taken off admissions register because the child is moving into another area or school, staff should first find out the name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start. This must be confirmed with the receiving school.

### **Schools should inform the improvement team if:**

- Parents do not name the receiving school; or
- If a pupil has "disappeared" from the area without explanation.

### **Acknowledging regular attendance**

School will actively promote attendance and reward effective progress.

### **School will discuss attendance during:**

Assemblies

Staff talks Parent's evenings

Governors meetings PSHE &

Citizenship Class talks

And through communication in every school newsletter On the school website

### **Appropriate information relating to attendance will be available for:**

Governors Staff

Pastoral Support Parents

Individual pupils or groups

Attendance Improvement Service

Rewards for regular attendance will form an integral part of an awards assembly.

School will also acknowledge the child's development associated with attendance and punctuality throughout the school year. School will also utilise appropriate work from outside agencies as necessary to assist school in developing initiatives and projects to assist in improving attendance.

## **Appendix A: Guidance for Parents – a letter sent out by the school to communicate expectations and actions.**

The policy will be reviewed every year.

# (Attendance Policy) APPENDIX A: Attendance Procedures

## *Dear Parents*

I am writing to explain our procedures around attendance, including what happens if a child's attendance becomes too low.

## Important General Information

- All of our procedures and steps we take to improve attendance are either set by the government, or have been agreed with the county's attendance improvement team.
- The government recognises attendance as good **if a child is at school for 96%** of the time or more. This means about 180 days out of a possible 190 school days.
- The government recognises attendance as poor **if a child's attendance drops below 90%**. This means 170 days or less out of a possible 190 school days. The government classes this as persistent absence.
- In other words, a child only has to be **absent for 7 school days per term to fall below 90%**.
- Schools are directed by the government to take action when a child's attendance drops below 90%.

## Our Procedures

- When a child is absent and we don't know why, the office will text out to parents. If we don't get a reply, we either text again or make a phone call to parents. Please contact us on the first day of a child's absence.
- If a child is late for school twice in one week, we text out to parents. If we have to text parents about lateness more than once in a month we will usually ask to meet with parents.
- If attendance or lateness is becoming a concern, the school will send out a 'Letter of Concern', which invites parents to contact the school for support, and outlines next steps should attendance or lateness not improve
- We will seek to meet with parents early, should we have a concern about attendance.
- We meet periodically with the attendance improvement team to discuss school's general attendance and lateness, and the attendance and lateness of individual children. At this meeting, courses of action are decided upon.

## Steps and Actions

If a child's attendance is a concern to school (consistently below 90%), this is what happens:

(Each additional step happens if attendance doesn't improve from the last step or action taken.)

1. A 'Letter of Concern' is sent out to parents.
2. The school seeks to meet with parents.
3. Parents have to provide medical evidence when their child is absent from school.
4. Parents are invited to meet with school and the county's attendance improvement team, where formal targets for attendance are set.
5. The child is referred to the county Attendance Improvement Team (a county department which manages prosecutions and fines).
6. Parents are required to meet with the county Attendance Improvement Team, where stricter targets are set.
7. Parents are prosecuted for their child's consistently poor attendance at school.

\*If a child is absent from school for 3 days, and we haven't had contact with parents, school will contact the attendance improvement team.

### What this all means for parents

The school's main interest is in the welfare of children. It is best for a child to attend school as often as possible to maximise their opportunities for learning and have the best possible prospects for their future. So, we will always seek to work with parents to achieve this. We always seek to avoid prosecutions but this is not always possible.

There will be times when absence from school is unavoidable and this is not a problem. If parents communicate clearly with us, we will always be sympathetic to the circumstances which result in absence from school. However, if school is unable to work with parents consistently, or if communication has broken down, or if attendance shows no sign of improving over time, then we have no alternative but to progress through the steps above.

If a parent receives a 'Letter of Concern' from the school or a letter from the county's attendance improvement team, it only means that we need to work together to improve the child's attendance. It doesn't mean that the school thinks badly of the parent or the parent is about to be prosecuted. A letter or a visit is just a formal step to highlight that attendance is currently too low.

Communication is everything. If parents keep us fully informed, we will always seek to help and support rather than to prosecute. If you have any questions, please contact me at the school and I will be happy to meet with you.

<b>Dates</b>	
<b>Date of last review</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> August 2018</b>
<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> August 2019</b>
<b>Staff</b>	
<b>Lead member of staff</b>	<b>Mr L. Jones</b>
<b>Lead governor</b>	<b>Mrs A. Mole</b>