



STEPHENSON WAY ACADEMY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

- Stephenson Way, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 7DD
 - Tel: 01325 300324 • Fax: 01325 300327 • Website: www.swcps.co.uk
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(Attendance Policy) APPENDIX A: Attendance Procedures

February 2016

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 Educational Welfare Officer.
- The government recognises attendance as good **if a child is at school for 95%** 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 meet with the Education Welfare Officer each week 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.



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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. The child is referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
4. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) either writes to parents and/or visits the home.
5. Parents have to provide medical evidence when their child is absent from school.
6. Parents are invited to meet with school and the Education Welfare Officer, where formal targets for attendance are set.
7. The child is referred to the county Attendance Improvement Team (a county department which manages prosecutions and fines).
8. Parents are required to meet with the county Attendance Improvement Team, where stricter targets are set.
9. 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, the EWO will make a home visit, even if the child's attendance is normally good.

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/visit from the Education Welfare Officer, 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.

Many thanks
Mr Jones,
Deputy Headteacher