

# THE STOKE POGES SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

<b>Date Approved</b>	September 2024
<b>Recommended Review Period</b>	Biannual
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	September 2026
<b>Person Responsible for the Policy</b>	Headteacher

### 1. Aims

At The Stoke Poges School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Buckinghamshire Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupil and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Amanda Benians and can be contacted via the school office.

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g. pastoral lead/SENDCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Janice Palmer and can be contacted via the school office.

### 3.5 Class teachers

The class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.

### 3.7 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to Mrs Palmer, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keep accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

### 3.8 Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help their child overcome any barriers to attendance

### 3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

## **4. School processes for recording attendance and absence**

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm (Reception and Key Stage 1) and 1.15pm for Key Stage 2 and will be kept open until 1.25pm.

### 4.2 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 9am, or as soon as practically possible, via the School Gateway App or via the school number on 01753 643319, selecting option 1 'to report an absent child'. If it is not possible to use either of these methods, parents should email [office@stokepoges.school](mailto:office@stokepoges.school) with reasons for non-attendance.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

#### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should request leave of absence for medical appointments by notifying the school office via the School Gateway App or via an email, in advance of the appointment. A copy of the hospital letter or appointment card should be presented to the school office, where possible. We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Parents should use the Leave of Absence form which can be downloaded from the website or a copy obtained via the school office.

#### 4.4 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

On arrival after the closure of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. An appropriate adult must sign them in.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late after the registers close without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

The designated senior leader for absence will ensure that lateness is analysed and followed-up, in the first instance, with a phone call or when a pattern is emerging to offer support to the parent.

#### 4.5 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 on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police or a social worker, if applicable
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance

- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

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

Teachers will also discuss the importance of regular attendance with parents, where necessary.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time and are strongly advised not to do so.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

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

Any request should be submitted on the Leave of Absence form as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents will contact the school should any delays occur

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (see definition above) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place (Code T)

- 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 (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

## 5.2 Sanctions

The school must consider requesting Buckinghamshire Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates’ court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) ‘parent’ means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

## **6. Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing**

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child’s attendance levels, this is achieved with termly traffic light letter, parents evenings, and phone calls or parent meetings where appropriate.
- Monitor attendance and absence data daily across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Collect pupil-level absence data each term and publish 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.
- 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and 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

## **7. 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
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Buckinghamshire Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Senior Lead for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:  
 Child protection and safeguarding policy  
 Behaviour policy

<b>Headteacher</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Chair of Governing Board</b>		<b>Date</b>	

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
<b>K</b>	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
<b>V</b>	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
<b>P</b>	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

<b>W</b>	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
<b>B</b>	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
<b>C1</b>	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school



<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and

		planned in advance, including school holidays
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