

Stradbroke Primary Attendance Policy

Supporting the achievement of all children



<u>Written By</u>	<u>Written Date</u>	<u>Review Date</u>	<u>Approved by</u>
Paul Grainger (Attendance officer) Stephen Nash (Big Attendance Champion)	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	

2022-23

Attendance Policy

Contents

- 1 Policy Statement
 - 1.1 Aims of the policy
 - 1.2 The law
 - 1.3 Attendance targets
- 2 School Organisation
 - 2.1 The school day
 - 2.2 Registration
- 3 Partnership
 - 3.1 Partnership with parents/carers – general
 - 3.2 Partnership with other schools/stakeholders in the Trust
 - 3.3 What the school expects of our pupils
 - 3.4 What the school expects of parents/carers
 - 3.5 What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the school
- 4 Procedures
 - 4.1 Registration
 - 4.2 Responding to lateness
 - 4.3 Responding to absence
 - 4.4 A referral may be made to MAST if:
 - 4.5 Awards and rewards
- 5 Authorising Absence
 - 5.1 Absence may be authorised if:
 - 5.2 Absence will not normally be authorised if:
- 6 Holidays in Term Time
 - 6.1 General
 - 6.2 Leave of Absence in term time will not be authorised
- 7 Children Missing from Education
- 8 Children Looked After
- 9 Early Years

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. At Stradbroke School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly and on time, and we are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them. Stradbroke is

a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All our staff show concern and care about each child's welfare.

1.1 Aims of the policy

To provide a formal framework to promote good attendance and punctuality

Clear procedures that encourage pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality

Ensuring that parents/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures relating to attendance and are encouraged to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality

Ensuring that all staff and governors understand the procedures

The commitment to the allocation of resources to support the policy

Addressing attendance and inclusion issues in the curriculum

Recognising and rewarding pupils for good attendance and punctuality

To provide a framework for appropriate referrals to the local MAST or other agencies

To set an appropriate school attendance target that all our children should aim to meet

1.2 The law - The 1996 Education Act requires that:

All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise

The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school

The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session

The school must report to the Local Authority any pupil who fails to attend regularly or are absent for more than ten days without explanation

The Local Authority ensures that parents/carers fulfil their legal responsibilities in respect of the education of their children

Failure by parents/carers to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law through the Magistrates Courts. Sanctions available to Magistrates include substantial fines, parenting and community service orders and custodial sentences

1.3 Attendance targets

The school's attendance target is 95.6%

2 School Organisation

2.1 The school day

Reception, Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 classes can arrive on the playgrounds for 08:40. Their class teacher or teaching assistant will collect from the playground and take them to class. Registration is at 08:50.

Year 2, Year 4, and Year 6 can arrive on the playground for 08:50. Their class teacher or teaching assistant will collect from the playground and take to class. Registration is at 09:00

The afternoon session begins at 13:00

3 Partnership

3.1 Partnership with parents/carers

It is vital that parents/carers are involved in the promotion of good attendance and punctuality. Stradbroke Primary School will provide regular attendance information in the form of a fortnightly newsletter to parents/carers and will support them to maintain their child's good attendance. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss any problems preventing regular attendance and to share in the success of their child at parents' evenings.

3.2 Partnership with other schools/Stakeholders in the Trust

Stradbroke Primary School works closely with the other schools within the Trust and with other local agencies, including the City's Family Intervention Service (FIS), to ensure that children and families have access to appropriate support where necessary, and to ensure consistency in maintaining high expectations of pupils' attendance.

The school works closely with parents/carers in respect of the transition both to Stradbroke School, and from Stradbroke to The Outwood Academy City and other local secondary schools

3.3 What the school expects of pupils:

They:

Attend regularly, arrive on time and are ready to learn

Are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment (e.g. P.E. kit)

Tell a member of staff if there is any problem that may prevent them from attending school

3.4 What the school expects of parents/carers:

They:

Fulfil their legal responsibility under the Education Act 1996 and ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time, and prepared for the day

Contact school before 9.30am on the first day that their child is absent for any reason and keep lines of communication open with school throughout the duration of a period of absence.

Arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible, and provide evidence of said appointment if this is during school hours.

Arrange holidays out of school time wherever possible. Further guidance is offered in the Exceptional Circumstances for Absence Policy.

Make contact with school to discuss any issues that may prevent their child from attending school

Avoid keeping children off school for trivial reasons (For example, minor coughs and colds, head lice or birthdays.) A helpful reference point can be found on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Work in partnership with the school to ensure good attendance and punctuality

3.5 What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the School:

A broad, balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school

The promotion of good attendance and punctuality

Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance

First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained

The pursuing of any concerns about absence from school, to ensure children's safety and well being

Prompt action when a problem has been identified

Support for any child who is experiencing difficulties in regular attendance in order to resolve the problem. This may include support from school staff, including the Attendance and Inclusion Officer, liaison with officers from the Local Authority and referral to other agencies when necessary and appropriate

Regular communication with parents/carers

A representative from the school governors and a member of staff to be responsible for attendance matters

That staff and governors continue to make Stradbroke School a place where children want to come and learn in a happy environment

4 Procedures

4.1 Registration

Registers are legal documents. Great care will be taken to ensure that registers are taken accurately.

Electronic registration takes place each morning at 08:50 for Reception, Year 1, Year 3, and Year 5 children and at 09:00 for Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 children.

A present mark (/ or \) will be entered in the register for each pupil present, and an absent mark (O) for any pupil who is absent without authorisation by the Headteacher. Where absence is authorised, for example, because of illness, an appropriate code will be entered in the register.

4.2 Responding to lateness

Pupils arriving to school after registration will report to the office

A late mark (L) will be recorded in the register where a child arrives late for school. The number of minutes late will be recorded after 9.00am

Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late and invited to a meeting to discuss ways of improving punctuality

A referral to the appropriate FIS may be made in order to access support for a child or family if necessary

Where a pupil is persistently late, prosecution procedures may be instigated

Persistently late children will be identified and targeted by the attendance officer

4.3 Responding to absence

Parents/carers will be contacted by school on the first day of absence if no reason has been provided

Reasons for absence will be recorded

The Headteacher will make the decision whether or not to authorise the absence

Where no acceptable reason is given, absence will be recorded as unauthorised

The School's Attendance Officer may make contact with parents/carers by telephone or home visit to discuss concerns about repeated absences

A letter outlining school's initial concerns will be sent to parents. This letter advises parent's that their child has had a number of days of absence. School will start to monitor the child's absence from that point. This is an opportunity for parents and school to work together to overcome any barriers or issues stopping a child attending regularly.

Parents/Carers may be invited to a meeting in school to discuss what help and support the family need if attendance hasn't improved.

Parents/Carers could then be invited to a School Attendance Panel meeting in school to discuss concerns about attendance.

A referral to the appropriate FIS or other agency may be made in order to access support for a child or family if necessary

When appropriate, legal action may be taken against parents/carers of pupils not attending regularly

Children who have 90% or below attendance, will be considered as persistent absentees

Identify persistent absentees

School use the register to identify children with less than 91% attendance. Each class to be monitored every 3 weeks on a rolling cycle.



Send initial concerns letters

Supportive letter sent to parents to inform of the situation and offer assistance to improve.



Invite to initial meeting

Parents of children who do not show improvement within the time frame invited into school for a meeting to make a plan and help the family to improve attendance.



School attendance panel meeting

Children who have still not shown improvement to be invited for a panel meeting to include the Attendance Champion, any relevant external agencies, and the school attendance governor.



Escalate to Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Specialist

If there has not been improvement within the time frame set, school will consult the local authority who may issue fines.



School work closely with Sheffield Inclusion and Attendance team. DfE guidance can be accessed by following the link below-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

4.4 A referral to the Family Intervention Service (FIS) may be made if:

Home/school contact and in-school support has not resulted in a satisfactory improvement in attendance

Attendance continues to give cause for concern and further support is needed to address issues preventing regular attendance

Legal action is pursued by the Headteacher following unacceptable levels of unauthorised absence or an unauthorised holiday.

4.5 Awards and rewards

Stradbroke Primary School has a variety of incentives that promote good attendance:

Display of weekly class attendance figures on the school's web site

A weekly prize draw with the chance to win £10 to spend at Amazon.com for children who have 100% attendance for the previous week. There is a prize for Nursery and Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Reward at the end of the year to any child with 100% attendance for the whole academic year

The recognition and rewarding of improved attendance

5 Authorising Absence

Authorisation of absence will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. A letter or telephone call from the parent/carer will not automatically guarantee that absence is authorised.

5.1 Absence may be authorised if:

The pupil is too ill to attend school (medical evidence may be required)

The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause

The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs

The pupil is the child of Traveller parents/carers who temporarily leave the area, giving reasonable indication of their intention to return

There is a close family bereavement

The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence

Leave of absence is granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances (See Appendix)

Medical or dental appointments in school time are unavoidable (evidence is required such as appointment cards or text messages from GP/Dental surgery)

5.2 Absence will not normally be authorised if:

No explanation is offered by the parent/carer

The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered

The pupil is staying home to look after family members or the home

The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. a birthday

The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. for shopping

6 Holidays in Term Time

6.1 General

Department for Education guidance clearly states that Head teachers may authorise leave in term time in exceptional circumstances only. Request for leave will be given on an individual basis. Refer to the Exceptional Circumstances for Leave Policy for further clarification.

There is no entitlement to take a holiday in term time

Parents/carers wishing to take a pupil out of school for a holiday are actively discouraged

Authorisation for children in receipt of short break grants will be at the discretion of the Head teacher and a meeting should be held with the Head teacher

Parents/carers must request leave, at least 20 days in advance where possible, and the Head teacher must consider the request and respond in writing within 10 days. The Head teacher may arrange a meeting to discuss an application further before making a decision and will take into account other factors such as school attendance

Requests for term time leave from school must include specific start and end dates

Children who do not return to school by the agreed return date may be at risk of losing their place at the school

Unless the head agrees there are exceptional circumstances for a holiday in term time, a penalty fine may be requested and a fine may be issued.

7 Children Missing from Education

Pupils who are absent for 10 days without reason or children who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures and the Children Missing from Education policy

8 Children Looked After

The Inclusion Manager is the co-ordinator to liaise with the Local Authority's Looked After Children Team. The attendance of children who are Looked After will be closely monitored

9. Early Years (From FEL Code of Practice 2022-23)

If a child is not accessing their agreed hours or is attending irregularly the following steps should be taken to try to improve attendance:

- At the Local Authority's discretion, providers can continue to claim funding for a child during periods of absence up to four weeks duration per Funding Year. The provider must be able to provide records of the actions they have taken and recorded outcomes to claim this funding.

First day of absence: if the parent has not contacted nursery with a reason for absence, the provider should contact the parent to establish the reason. Providers must make parents aware of the need to contact the setting without delay if their child is unable to attend. If at any stage of a child being absent the child is thought to be suffering or is at risk of suffering harm, providers must follow the guidance in the current Sheffield Safeguarding Child Protection Procedures:

<http://sheffieldscb.proceduresonline.com> Providers must maintain attendance records of all FEL children, and supply this on request to the Local Authority. This includes a register, robust monitoring procedures and accurately recording information provided by parents when making first day absence calls. 35 • Three consecutive sessions or one week's absence as shown in the following examples: This table shows a typical delivery pattern for 3 x 5hr sessions where 3 consecutive sessions could be 3 in the same week as for Child A or the same session for 3 consecutive weeks as for Child B.

If either of the patterns of absence shown in Tables 1 or 2 occurs with no contact with the family, the provider should contact the child's Health Visitor to share this concern. If the child has a named Social Worker, the Social Worker should be contacted as a matter of urgency. Where a child has missed 3 consecutive sessions without notice and the provider is unable to contact the family, the provider should follow the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board's (SSCB) guidance; Children Missing from Pre-School Services: <https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/sscb/early-years/safeguarding-practice-guidance-1> • Two weeks' absence – If two weeks elapse without the

child attending but contact has been made with the family, the provider can request attendance support via the Early Years Partnership Process. This should be made via an Early Help Part 1 form or if the family has more complex needs a referral can be made via a Family CAF: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/social-care/fcaf-resources> After four weeks' of unauthorised absence the place will not be funded unless the Local Authority has given written authorisation to the provider.

Reduced Attendance

- Where a child is not attending for all of the hours agreed in the Parent/Carer Agreement form, the provider should contact the parent to remind them of the agreed hours.
- If attendance does not improve, the provider should write to the parent explaining that if they do not use the hours they have chosen, these will be reviewed and possibly reduced.
- Providers should discuss the issues concerning the child's absence with the family and explore options to encourage attendance such as reducing the number of sessions or rearranging the sessions to make them more easily accessible.
- Providers should record the actions they have taken to improve attendance and record the outcomes, i.e. did attendance improve?

Exceptional Circumstances

- Where there are genuine circumstances for a child not attending or attending sporadically for short periods, providers should record the action they have taken to monitor the child's absence and the support they are providing to assist the child to access their full entitlement. Examples of exceptional circumstances are bereavement or illness of the child or a family member.

Holidays

Funding will be paid for holidays taken during FEL funded weeks for up to four weeks in a funding year. However, a firm return date must be provided by the parent. If the child does not return on the agreed date then they should be treated as a leaver and the provider should enter the agreed return date as the leaving date for the child when submitting this information on the headcount task, the parent/carers would then need to reapply for a place on their return. It is the provider's choice whether to keep a place open for any child going on holiday for any longer than four weeks or not confirming a return date; but it will not be funded by the Local Authority. Holiday funding is based on a child's normal pattern of attendance as agreed in the Parent/Carer Agreement. For example, a child that normally attends for 2 x 5 hour days a week would have a holiday allowance of 8 x 5 hour days per funding year. This must be recorded in the attendance register.

Public Holidays

If a public holiday falls on a day when a child would normally attend the setting, providers can claim funding if they have the parent's agreement that they do not wish to use those hours at a different time. This should be recorded on the Parent/Carer Agreement. If parents do not agree, the provider can either redistribute those hours across other days, or not claim funding for those hours. 8:10 Settling In Periods Where children are new to a setting, they may need a few weeks using fewer hours to settle in. The provider will be paid for the full amount of planned hours during this settling in period. The provider needs to claim for the full planned hours at the headcount tasks. Longer settling in periods can be arranged with the Inclusion Team on an individual basis where there are

exceptional circumstances – see Section 6: Inclusion. Providers should request this through the Local Authority. 8:11 Staggered Starts Some settings may want to build in a staggered start to the beginning of a new year (i.e. the autumn school term), in order to increase the number of new children gradually. However, providers will only be paid from the date attendance starts for each individual child. Staggered starts will not be funded. Some schools use staggered starts for children moving to reception class. Because the child is being funded for their school place, they cannot be double funded for a FEL place while they wait. Therefore providers cannot claim FEL funding for a child on a staggered start into school reception. Settings which operate a staggered start should prioritise children from families who might have to pay for childcare to cover this period. This may be particularly relevant to working families. Where a staggered start means that a parent is caught between the early years setting and reception class, leaving them without a place for their child, they should be advised that they are entitled to the funded school place and to pursue that entitlement with the school.

APPENDIX A

Exceptional Circumstances for Absence from School

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher should also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstance:

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year six transition day (for pupils in year six).
- 3) Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six).

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- **Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested**
- **Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed**
- **The child's current attendance and punctuality rate**
- **Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose**
- **Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday**
- **Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school**
- **Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN**
- **The impact that the absence will have on the child.**
- **Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;**

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.