



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Regular attendance at school is a priority at Stoke Damerel Community College we recognise the strong link between attendance throughout the five years of secondary education and GCSE results at the end of Year 11. Our current Attendance target is 97%

2. Legislation and guidance

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](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Under new GDPR regulations every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.20pm and will be kept open until 1pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

The school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence before authorising absences of this nature. If this evidence is not provided or is insufficient to explain the period of absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Students are reminded regularly of the importance of punctuality to school and being prepared for learning. Three late to registration marks will result in a detention which parents will be notified about promptly. Incentives are often offered to promote punctuality and are agreed with the year team.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Section 444(1) and Section 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996 determines the legal requirement for regular attendance at school, the responsibility of which is placed on parents and carers. Various supportive strategies are used to improve student attendance to school and parents are encouraged to access support with addressing issues. This flow chart demonstrates school responses to students that have poor attendance or are at risk of persistent absenteeism. See Appendix for the Flow Diagram of involvement.

3.6 Reporting to parents

School will contact parents/carers by text, letter or phone call when no contact has been made to report an absence. When no contact is made following these attempts, letters are sent reporting concern to parents which include a record of unauthorised absence.

Attendance information is also provided at Review Days and via Tutors at intervals through the year. A termly letter is sent home when students fall below average attendance within their year group. Parents can check school attendance records via Go4Schools throughout the year.

Parents/Carers can request their child's attendance record at any time via the attendance team or individual year teams

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and these decisions will be made on individual basis.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Get attendance right in the lower school and set habits of good attendance. In the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs, the curriculum will be regularly reviewed. The curriculum will be monitored and developed to meet the needs of all students. Attendance data will be collected and analysed to inform pastoral and curriculum practices. Parents/Carers, students and staff are to be regularly reminded of the types of absence which are recognised as authorised and as unauthorised. Learning Managers will award termly certificates/rewards to all students whose attendance/punctuality is either excellent or much improved. Good (and improved) attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded through assemblies and the tutorial programme. Regular,

structured meetings will be held with the school's Attendance team in order to identify and support those students whose attendance/punctuality is a source of concern. Regular, structured meetings will be held with the Attendance manager, Student Welfare Director and Senior Manager linked to attendance to identify and support any students who are persistent absentees. Parents/Carers will be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality. Early intervention support will be offered in order to remove barriers and improve attendance to school. Designated staff may arrange a school meeting or undertake home visits where attendance falls below school expectations. Students are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance. Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually-tailored programme. All issues which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties are to be promptly investigated by the Tutor, Assistant Learning Manager or Learning Manager. Home visits may be undertaken to help reduce barriers to attending school. Visits to feeder primary schools will be made in order to ensure the fullest support for all students during secondary transfer and in order to help identify any students who may need special help.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance lead monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Absences will only be authorised by a member of the Attendance Team

If a pupil's absence goes above 8 sessions days we will contact the parents to invite them into college to complete an individual attendance plan (IAP) to explore any barriers to attendance and set targets for improvement.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider legal invention including Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) of £60.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. School has a duty to respond to and report to the local authority, students categorised as a persistent absentee.

6.1 Children Missing Education (CME)

When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, school will make reasonable enquiries via known contact details and through agencies involved with the family. Visits may be undertaken to friends/neighbours and linked primary schools contacted. School will liaise with Plymouth and other local authorities where appropriate to establish the whereabouts of a child missing education and follow local information sharing arrangements in making enquiries to agencies including housing, health, police and children's social care.

Child Missing Education (or at risk of) are reported on to the local authority. Students below 50% attendance are recognised as CME and the school will respond in accordance with our safeguarding duty.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy. Termly updates will be provided to the Local Governing Body through the Governors Report.

7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Works with Attendance & Inclusion Welfare Service to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Requests outreach work is undertaken
- Advises the Principal when to take enforcement action/prosecution.

7.4 Tutors and Class Teachers

Tutors and Class Teacher are responsible for accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Tutor are responsible for interviewing their tutees after a period of absence and completing the the Return to School (R2S) Form

7.5 Attendance Team and Reception staff

Attendance Team and Reception staff staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Assistant Vice Principal with responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our behaviour and welfare, child protection and safeguarding policies.

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
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

