

Stow Heath Primary School



Attendance Policy

February 2023



Your child helps to make Stow Heath Primary School a thriving school.

It is vital that children attend school regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open to ensure that our children gain the greatest benefit from their education,

Our Attendance target for individual pupils is 97%. This is in line with expectations for all schools across the country.

Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Similarly any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children':

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis is a safeguarding concern under the category of neglect and may be reported to Children's services for further investigation.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality band is and how this relates to their attainment and progress in school.
- celebrate excellent attendance through recognition, assemblies, certificates and special events

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from the parent / carer, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given by the school. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

There may be times when children can be unhappy about attending school. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. Below is a table to show the channels to follow to raise concerns as soon as possible to avoid issues escalating:

1st point of contact	Class Teachers			
2nd point of contact	Miss Davis Assistant Head: EYFS	Miss Westwood Assistant Head: Years 1 & 2	Mrs Bunce Assistant Head: Years 3 to 6	Mrs H Billing-Hill Family Liaison & Safeguarding Officer Mrs C Downen Inclusion Lead
3rd points of contact	Mrs Scoffham - Headteacher Mrs Nicholls - Deputy Headteacher			

If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending as this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually can makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly.

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. PA pupils are monitored carefully by school with the support of the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must contact us **no later than 9.30am on the first day of absence.**

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- invite you in to discuss the situation if necessary.
- complete a home visit on day 3 if we have not heard from you
- refer the matter to the Local Authority if attendance reaches a level of concern for us.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. It is your responsibility to ensure your child attends school on time every day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

How we manage Lateness

The school day starts at 8.45am and the gates close at 8.45am promptly. Pupils arriving at school after 8:45am must be accompanied by an adult to the front office (on Hill Road).

The parent / guardian must give a reason for the lateness. If a child is late then this is recorded on the register as an L initially and then a U (after registration closes) we add a note to the register to record the number of minutes late. The registers are closed at 9.00am. It should be noted that for children who are persistently late, the school may decide to move that child's close of register forward to 8.55am which means that if they arrive after this time their mark will be recorded as Unauthorised Late (U) – this affects their overall attendance figure.

If your child is persistently late you may be asked to meet with the school's Attendance Officer and/or Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your 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 and the Government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Headteachers have no discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school in writing when requesting any leave for their children so that each case can be considered on an individual basis. The LOA form needs to be completed by a parent/s with whom the pupil normally resides.

The following situations **might** be considered examples of 'exceptional circumstances':

- Return of parent from active service (Forces);
- Death or serious illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling;
- Young Carers;
- Periods of obligatory religious observance;
- Approved public performances (with clear supporting evidence).

The following (not exhaustive) are examples of situations which **would not** typically be considered as exceptional:

- Family holiday/cheaper holiday dates;
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time;
- Attendance at a wedding or christening;
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK;
- Limitations on parents / carers leave' entitlement or dates; parents / carers' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays;
- A family member going for medical treatment abroad.

Any request for absence which might be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' should be put in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance as possible, including any relevant supporting

The decision whether to grant leave, and if so how much, remains with the Headteacher. Parents / carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity.

On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, or if we believe a child has been taken out of school for a period of 5 Days without authorisation then it will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to our Education Welfare Officer.

Following the referral to the EWO, Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority and fines will be implemented. This is currently £60 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; and £120 if paid between 21 & 28 days of receipt of the notice

The people with responsibility for attendance matters in this school are:

- Mrs Scoffham – Head Teacher
- Mrs Mincher – Attendance Officer

Summary

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to guarantee a high level of attendance. Through good attendance we can ensure every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Governing Body.

Stow Heath Primary School's Attendance Ladder

Percentage	Category	How much time has my child missed?	Action to expect
100%	Perfect!	0 days missed from school	The Gold Standard! Exemplary attendance and punctuality which will be celebrated
99%	Excellent!	2 missed days from school	Excellent attendance and punctuality which will be celebrated
97% (school target)	Good	5 missed days from school	Good attendance and punctuality which will be celebrated
94-97%	Needs to Improve	Up to 10 missed days from school	Your child's attendance is beginning to cause concern. You will receive a letter highlighting your child's attendance and asking for improvement to bring your child's attendance up. You may be called for a meeting to discuss your child's attendance and to offer support where needed.
90 – 93%	Serious Concern	Up to 20 missed days from school	There are serious concerns over your child's attendance. You will be called into an attendance meeting to identify reasons for absence and discuss the effect this is having on your child's progress. A parental contract will be drawn up to improve your child's attendance.
Below 90%	Persistently Absent	More than 20 school days missed or more	Your child has been identified as persistently absent. You will be called to a meeting where it is likely that an Early Help Assessment will be completed. This assessment will detail what support is needed from other professional services in order to improve attendance. A fixed penalty may be issued at this point

Example letter for parents (Yellow)

Dear XXXX

Attendance Matters and You Can Help

Our expectation is that pupils attend school every day for every session. We believe that regular, uninterrupted attendance secures the best possible learning achievement for all our children and we are committed to working in partnership with families to achieve this.

This is to inform you that XXXX has missed more school than their classmates.

XXXX was absent for XX days so far this school year which equates to an attendance of XX.

Pupils fall behind when they miss school – whether students are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

What does the attendance percentage mean across a school year?

Attendance Percentage	Days of learning missed
97%	5 days
94%	10 days
90%	20 days
85%	30 days
80%	40 days

We would really appreciate your support in ensuring insert XXXX attends school regularly.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can do anything to support your family.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Scoffham

Headteacher



Example Letter for an Attendance Improvement

Date:

Dear XXXX

Thank you for your support in ensuring that XXXX attendance is improving.

Their percentage attendance is currently XXX.

We really do appreciate your help as there is clear evidence that good school attendance improves a child's chance of success in life.

Please do contact us if you would like to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Scoffham

Headteacher





Example Letter for Attendance Concerns (Orange)

Date:

Dear XXXX

Attendance Matters and You Can Help

Stow Heath Primary School are committed to ensuring our pupils achieve the best possible outcomes and good school attendance is key to achieving this aim.

Unfortunately, following our letter/meeting/discussion XXXX attendance has not sufficiently improved. They have XX number of absences which means that their attendance is currently X%.

We would really appreciate your help in improving this and are therefore inviting you to an attendance meeting at location on date, time.

This meeting will be attended by insert details. It is really important that you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to child's name non-attendance can be discussed and appropriate support put in place to improve their attendance.

Please email admin@stowheathprimaryschool.co.uk to confirm receipt of this letter and your intention to attend the meeting.

Please be aware that should there be no improvement in XXXX's attendance, you may be referred to the Local Authority and Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority and fines will be implemented.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Scoffham

Headteacher





Example Letter regarding Punctuality

Date:

Dear XXXX

Punctuality Matters and You Can Help

At Stow Heath Primary School, we are determined to ensure that name of pupil has the opportunity to achieve their best and we want them to have an excellent record of regular, punctual attendance.

XXX has been late on XX number days so far this school year.

You can have a big effect on pupil name's punctuality this term, and we appreciate your help. We are sure that you are aware of the importance of punctual school attendance for XXXX:

- When they are on time, XXXX will be part of all the important learning and hear all the instructions on how to complete a piece of work
- Social interaction with peers before school is important if XXXX is to form friendship groups
- Arriving on time may be less embarrassing for XXXX
- When XXXX arrives on time they can settle more easily, this more likely to maintain a calm learning environment for them and their classmates

The school gates open for pupils to arrive from 8.40am and the children are expected to be in class ready to begin the school day when the bell goes at 8.45am . The school gates are closed at 8.55am and the register is closed at 9am.

We value the working partnership we have with parents so, if you would like to discuss any aspect of your child's attendance or punctuality with us, please contact the main office to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Scoffham

Headteacher

