

Attendance Policy

Aim

The aim of Stone Lodge Academy's Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, pupils and all school staff.

Parents' responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:- "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence"

(NB Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. Ideally this should be by telephone on the first day of absence and confirmed in writing. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. If, however, parents apply to the school in advance, the school may, at the Headteacher's discretion, grant up to two weeks' term-time absence in any academic year.

Attached is a Guide for Parents, which may help to answer some important questions.

School's responsibilities

All the staff at Stone Lodge Academy will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:-

- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence);
- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- Contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and recording the contact;

- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- Promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school);
- In addition, Stone Lodge Academy's Home-School Agreement includes clear understandings about attendance and punctuality.

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been screened for potential adverse impact on specific groups within the school community. It is not believed that this policy will have any such adverse impact.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

School opens for pupils at 8:40am. Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time.

2. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This should be followed up with a written explanation on your child's return to school. If the child returns to school with no written explanation of the absence, a letter will be sent to you requesting this information.

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

3. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment or clinic/hospital appointments
- (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Attending an interview for a job, college, university etc.

- Family holiday (only when prior approval has been given – see question 6)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

4. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays.

5. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school will try to contact you, if we have not heard from you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you should complete an application form, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to:

Your child's age

The time of year

Overall attendance pattern of your child

7. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

8. My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's teacher and openly discuss your worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Welfare Service is based at:

Ipswich South and West Integrated Team
Landmark House, 4 Egerton Road, Ipswich, IP1 5PF
Tel: 01473 263392

A GUIDE FOR STAFF

REGISTRATION

Calling of the registers:

Classroom teachers are responsible for attendance registers (a list of recommended register codes is attached).

Registers will be called promptly at **8:55am** and **1:40pm** by the class teacher.

Registers will close at **9.00am** and **1.45pm**.

If a pupil fails to arrive before the register closes, he/she will be marked absent.

Who will amend the register?

The Attendance Officer will amend the registers to indicate lateness if a pupil arrives after the register closes.

Monitoring Procedures

Attendance registers will be monitored half termly by the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer.

Authorised/Unauthorised

Providing an explanation is received, an absence can be authorised for:-
Illness

Dental/medical appointments

Day of religious observance

Family bereavement

Exceptional special occasions, e.g. family wedding

Family holiday, where prior approval has been obtained from the Headteacher

The pupil is not within walking distance and no suitable travel arrangements have been made by the LA

It will remain unauthorised:

If no explanation is received from parents

For shopping trips

For unexceptional special occasions, e.g. birthdays

For family holidays longer than the duration originally authorised by the Headteacher

For family holidays where prior permission was not sought or was refused.

If staff are unsure how to mark a particular absence they should consult with the Attendance Officer

Keeping of Notes

Absence notes should be kept in the back of the class register. These notes should be passed to the office staff for filing into individual pupil's files.

Following up absences

Rapid responses are essential if there is no contact from the parent.

In cases where there is doubt about an explanation received, contact should be made with the parent.

Strategies employed to support pupils and parents

1. On a daily basis the Attendance Officer will go through the registers between 9:30 and 10:30am and any absences will be noted. If no explanation has been received, school will attempt to contact the parent.
2. If the child returns to school with no written explanation of the absence, a letter will be sent to the parent requesting this information.
3. If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the Headteacher will speak to the parent about their child's pattern of absences.
4. If there is no significant improvement, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents and invite them into school to discuss attendance.
5. Once point 4 is reached the Education Welfare Officer should receive copies of all previous attempts made.

Absence and Attendance Codes

- A** Present.....
- B** Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
- C** Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) ..
- D** Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
- E** Excluded (No alternative provision made)
- F** Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
- G** Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- H** Family Holiday (agreed).....
- I** Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
- J** Interview.....
- L** Late (before registers closed).....
- M** Medical/Dental appointments.....
- N** No reason yet provided for absence
- O** Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- P** Approved sporting activity.....
- R** Religious observance
- S** Study leave
- T** Traveller absence.....
- U** Late (after registration closed).....
- V** Educational visit or trip.....
- W** Work experience
- X** Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
- Y** Enforced closure

Z Pupil not on roll

School closed to pupils.....