Stanford Junior and Infant School
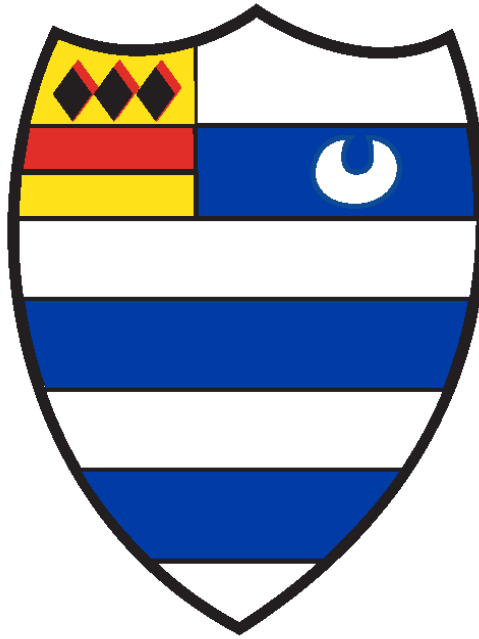
Attendance Policy

*"Living Together,
Learning Together"*

Prepared by Senior Leadership Team:	**September 2022**
Adopted by Governors:	**September 2022**
Last Review:	**October 2023**
Approved by Policy Committee:	**October 2023**
Date of next Review:	**September 2024 or earlier if required**

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:
> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:
> 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, 2016 amendments)

> 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:
> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

> Link governor for attendance

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> 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

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Dawn King, Business Manager and can be contacted 01472 318003, kingd@stanfordschool.co.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officers are Lesley Toyne and Michelle Moore who work in conjunction with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer and can be contacted via 01472 318003 or office@stanfordschool.co.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis using Scholarpack online registers linked with the schools MIS system. They must mark the child present or leave blank if absent and submit to the school office by 9.15 for morning register and by 13.15 for afternoon register. The office staff will update the register using the correct codes, mark any lates and

absences. It is the responsibility of all staff to implement the Attendance Policy consistently and to create a climate for learning that promotes positive attendance. Staff should also:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

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

> Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes

> To follow up unreported absences and follow school policy as soon as possible

> To report to the headteacher and liaise with the Education Welfare Office when required

> To provide monthly and termly reports to the headteacher and governing body

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> 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

> Should inform school on the first day of their child's absence and each subsequent day of absence by telephone or email by 9.30am. When contacting the school, press option 1 to record your child as absent. Failure to do so results in a telephone call or text message from the office, and may result in the absence being unauthorised, if we cannot contact the parent. The parent should also state how long they anticipate their child will be absent.

The Education Welfare Service also monitor absences on a regular basis and will address any irregularities with pupils' attendance. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance, the fast track system may be implemented. This begins with parents attending a School Attendance Panel meeting. Targets will be set for the following month and if these are not achieved parents will be requested to attend a Local Authority Panel meeting. If their attendance still does not improve this could result in a court appearance and a fine.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register 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.
We will also record:
> For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55 on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am.
The register for the second session will be taken at 13.05pm and will be kept open until 13.30pm.

4.2 Unplanned 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 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school office staff (see also section 7). We also have a specific voicemail where absence messages can be left. Telephone 01472 318003, email office@stanfordschool.co.uk

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers 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/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please contact the school office, face-to-face, telephone or email, please provide evidence of appointments this can be a letter, email or text.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

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

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school is used to give out instructions or organise work. If a child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

The school day begins at 8:55am and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time as morning registration takes place then.

> All lateness (after 8:55am) is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

> Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.

> If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Lateness is recorded on the child's permanent record which follows throughout their school life and is monitored by the Admin Officer and the Learning Mentor. If a child is regularly late the Learning Mentor will contact the parent to discuss this and offer support. School works closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) through regular meetings on subjects such as letters of concern, home visits and more formal attendance procedures.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

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/carer 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 make a home visit or involve the education welfare officer

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, phone, text, email or home visit

- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

- 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

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels if below 90% or on the pupils annual report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are: "rare, significant, or unavoidable"; which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the vast majority of cases a holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to be made in writing by the parents in advance, as the Department for Education (DfE) has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken. This letter should detail the reason why the request is being made.

Permission will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher. Penalty notices may be issued to each child and each parent by the Local Authority when leave is not authorised.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the 10% threshold then parents/carers may be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action.

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 out during school time.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence in writing to the headteacher. The headteacher may require evidence

to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

School's strategies for rewarding and improving attendance are:

> Celebrating good attendance in assemblies or on displays
> Termly and yearly excellent attendance certificates

7. Attendance monitoring

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and for reviewing the policy annually in partnership with staff and the Governing Body. Consistency of use will, therefore, be monitored throughout the year.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the head teacher, governors and other 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

7.4 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
- Liaise and work in conjunction with the education welfare officer, who will provide letters and meet with parents, complete home visits

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the policy committee.

9. Links with other policies

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

> Behaviour policy

Chair of Governors: **Date:** Approved Oct23

Headteacher: **Date:** Approved Oct23

Review Date	Amendments	Approved Date
September 2022	Policy Written	September 2022
October 2023	Policy Review – Highlighted Amendment	October 2023

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