

# Attendance Policy

Reviewed January 2021



**The Stour Academy Trust**

*Adisham CE Primary School is a distinctively Christian school so the story and values of our Christian faith impact on all our relationships and how we view our policies. Recognising that God wants us all to live life in all its fullness we are concerned that all children are enabled to flourish at school and to achieve their potential socially, emotionally, spiritually and academically. We approach this policy with a caring and listening attitude, recognising that parents and carers may be reluctant to express their concerns and their circumstances, which may impact on their children's absences from school. We will try to be creative in supporting and encouraging parents and carers in enabling their children to attend school.*

**Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays.**

**There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.**

**We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality.**

**The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives full time education. Therefore, a pupil's previous record of attendance will not be taken into account when making decisions regarding requests for leave of absence as full attendance is the expected standard.**

## **Background**

The education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the notional threshold of ten school days. The amendments made clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist. Therefore our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. We regret that exceptional circumstances will only be agreed **very rarely**.

## **Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligations to the DfE and pupils with regards to school attendance by:

- o Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence



- o Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- o Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also do our best to 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.

### **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:

- o Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- o Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- o Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- o [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- o [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.

### **What does the DfE accept as exceptional circumstances?**

- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, but not usually for extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account for the ceremony and travelling time, but not for extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Unavoidable medical appointments and hospital visits
- Absences to visit family members are not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives and the school will authorise compassionate leave, up to a maximum of three days.
- Failure by local Authority to provide transport



## **What is not accepted by the DfE as exceptional circumstances?**

- Holidays, even where employees are not granted leave by their employer during school holidays.
- Holidays booked by other family members.
- Financial savings made by holidays during term times.
- Birthdays or weddings abroad.

## **Other unacceptable reasons for absence**

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell.
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill.
- Absence of sibling who attends another school where absence is due to school closure e.g. development day/snow.
- Parental illness except in emergencies when other transport arrangements cannot be made.
- Transport issues e.g. breakdown of a car.
- Oversleeping.
- Inadequate clothing/uniform.
- Confusion over school dates.
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons.
- Child's/family birthday.
- Shopping trip.
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may be a cause for concern and may result in a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer. In some cases the School Liaison Officer may even consider prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

## **Impact of absence**

Parents, guardians and carers should ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on:

- a) Your child's learning
- b) Other pupils learning, as resources including teacher and teaching assistant are diverted onto returning pupils.

## **Responsibility**



There is a **whole school responsibility** and approach for improving school attendance. Class Teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon as per The Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 – England. The school's Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

It is the **parents' responsibility** to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning.

**Should we not be able to contact you, we will undertake a home visit.**

### **Absence through illness**

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is generally not considered acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of an appointment card confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

Please avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day. If such appointments are necessary e.g. appointments allocated for you, such absences usually only take up part of a day and children should attend either before and/or after the appointment. The school office will require a copy of the appointment letter in order to authorise the absence.

Unfortunately, the most common cause of absence is for diarrhoea and/or vomiting. Children should stay off school for 48 hours after last bout (this is 24 hours after the last bout plus 24 hours recovery time). This is to avoid widespread contamination. Please check your child understands why they need to wash and dry their hands frequently. Where sickness is not due to a contagious infection ie a coughing bout, and the child shows no signs of being unwell, then parents should use their discretion regarding their child's fitness to return to school.

### **Lateness**

**Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**



School gates open at 8.30 am (unless accessing Breakfast Club). Children must be in class by 8.50 a.m. each day and registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school gates will be shut by 8.45 am. Children who arrive after that time will be recorded with the reason for their lateness and must come into the building via the main office. They will be marked as an L code.

Lateness will be carefully monitored and where there are concerns we may need to have a discussion with parents and potentially then also with the attendance service – School Liaison Officers will occur. If deemed necessary, penalty fines may be issued for unauthorised lateness.

If the arrival at school occurs after 9.00, the pupil will receive a ‘U’ mark. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.

Pupils who are consistently late are sadly disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping in line with Project 95. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the parent support advisor (PSA), the attendance officer or headteacher.

<b>95 – 100%</b>	Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child’s progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
<b>95%</b>	Average – Strive to build on this. We will work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 97%+
<b>90 – 95%</b>	The school is part of the ‘Project 95’ initiative and we will write to all parents when their child’s attendance falls below 95%. An informal meeting to discuss attendance will be arranged.
	Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school may consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice and may make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service. For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification

## Penalty notices for poor attendance



## **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.**

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Attendance Service. This may result in a fixed Penalty Notice being requested by the school of the Local Authority. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

Where penalty notices are imposed the KCC regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 days period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

If the penalty notice is not paid, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to a maximum of £1,000, plus costs.

Note: Parent also includes guardian/carer

- A penalty notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half days sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive
- A penalty notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a penalty notice is received, the KCC inclusion and attendance service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child).

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017 when:



- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child).
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings.

## **Children Missing in Education**

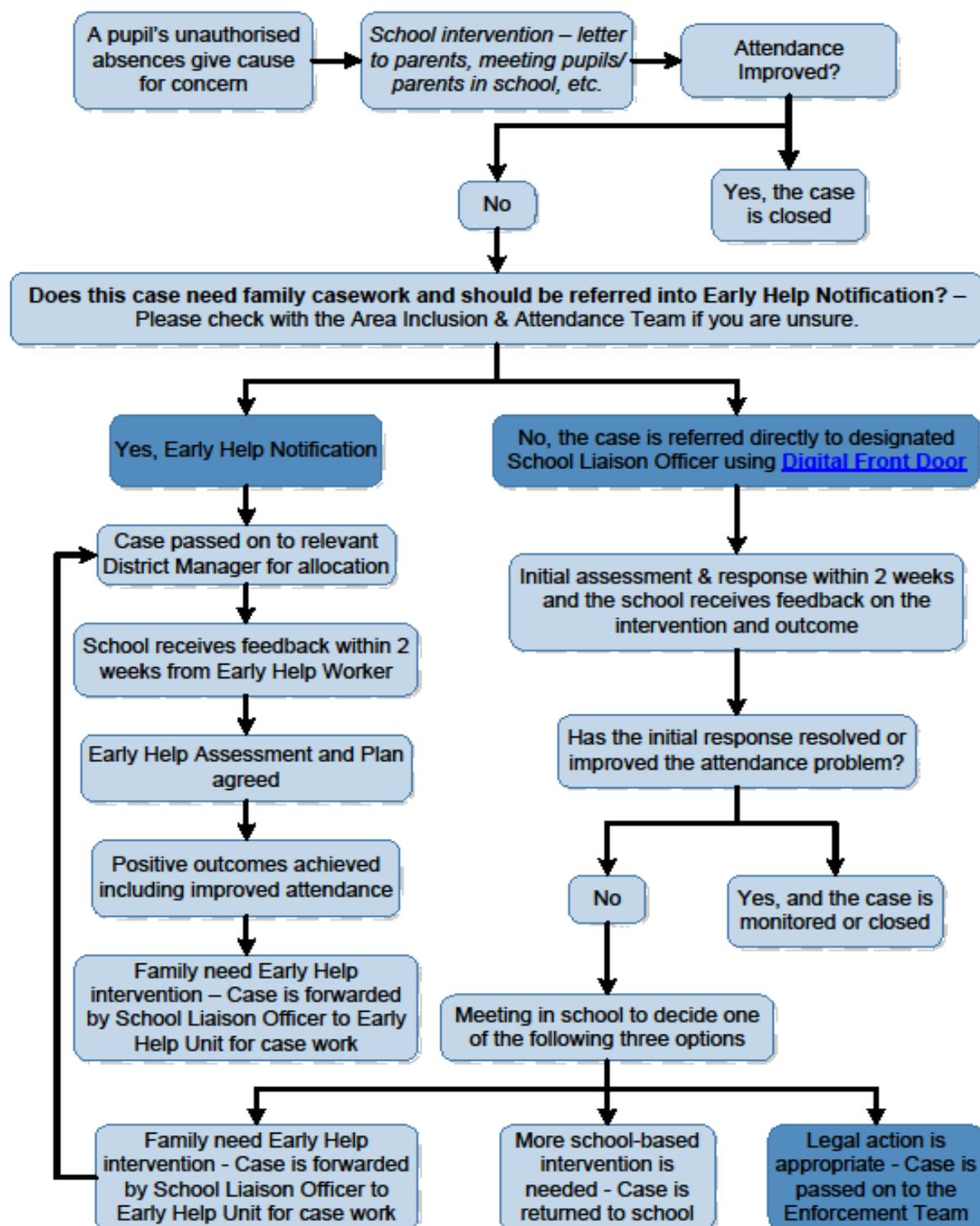
It is important that no child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Stour Academy Trust, Head Teacher of the Academy, School Attendance Officer and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority Guidance will be followed, by complete a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- a) If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to located him/her
- b) The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.



## Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance



## **Covid Addendum (September 2020):**

From September 2020, attendance to school will return to being mandatory (unless directed by the government or other circumstances- see below). We will continue to promote excellent attendance; thus enabling and encouraging all pupils to achieve. Attendance has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of pupils. Securing good attendance is a fundamental responsibility within our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our school. The Stour Academy Trust will reinforce that it is the parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age. In order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 the school has implemented a number of safety measures which must be adhered to by staff and children. These can be found on our school website in our risk assessments.

If a child or a member of their household becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must follow the Government guidance named 'stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID19) infection', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

Although school attendance is mandatory from September 2020, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). The following guidance has been taken from 'Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year' Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

- If symptoms develop, the child and household should immediately seek medical advice
- If a child tests negative and they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID 19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- If a child tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone



## **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

- As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine

## **Register coding**

A student will be coded as I (Illness) in the following scenarios:

- Following a negative COVID-19 test result and the student remains feeling unwell and unable to attend school
- Following a positive test result, for the remainder of their period of isolation
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A student will be coded as X in the following scenarios:

- School closure/partial closure due to local lockdown
- A student awaiting a COVID-19 test result
- A student awaiting the test result of a member of their household. If the test is negative, the student must return to school immediately
- A member of the students household tests positive for coronavirus and therefore the student must isolate for 14 days
- The local health protection team advise that a student should be isolating following close contact with a person who has been confirmed with coronavirus
- Quarantine following a trip overseas
- If advice is given by the Government for particular vulnerable groups to shield

## **Remote learning provision (See Remote Learning Policy)**

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education.

**Policy Reviewed January 2021**

