

Attendance Policy

Category: School Policy

Status: Approved

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Signed (Chair of Governors):



THE STANWAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Education Act 1996 states that all students should attend school regularly and punctually.

At The Stanway School we are committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are any problems that affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The school:

- expects students to attend school every day and be on time, properly equipped and ready to learn
- will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality
- staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness
- works with an external attendance agency - Aquinas, the Attendance Compliance Team (ACT) and families to promote good attendance. Our Aquinas will work with the school in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible
- will work with families to promote good attendance
- will include in reports to parents on achievement their child's attendance at least annually
- has annual attendance targets set by Governors. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target.

- will follow the DFE guidelines for children missing from education

Our Students:

- are advised that their attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if students are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school every day.
- will attend lessons punctually
- can expect to be welcomed back and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up
- will be listened to and respected
- will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged and monitored by the school and Aquinas.

Parents/Carers:

- are responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in appropriate condition to learn
- are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence, stating the expected return date where possible. Students not attending school for more than one day are expected to provide a note on their return
- should be aware that where the school does not receive an acceptable reason for a student's absence, it is required to record in the register and on their record the absence as an unauthorised absence
- are advised that if attendance problems do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff, Aquinas and ACT if needed.
- are informed here that ACT carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance
- can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record. This information can also be readily accessed by parents on one of our Parental Engagement portals such as Go4Schools and Arbor
- should note that where a student's attendance falls or is in danger of falling below expectation, letters informing parents may be sent and there are likely to be attendance meetings in school with the student concerned. Where this fails to resolve poor attendance, parents will be contacted by phone or invited to a school based meeting where support and advice to improve attendance will be offered. If attendance still does not improve following this meeting, a referral may be made to ACT.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Parents/Carers should not take children on holiday in term time. In EXCEPTIONAL* circumstances a parent/carer may request leave of absence by writing to the school outlining the specific circumstances/reason behind their request for leave of absence. The request will be considered carefully taking into consideration the student's attendance record, family circumstances and timing of the request with regard to assessments and examinations. Any request for leave of absence MUST be made in advance (*exceptional is determined at the discretion of the Headteacher).

Leave of absence or holidays taken without permission are recorded as an unauthorised absence. The school expects all students to attend school every day that they are required to do so. If there is an unauthorised term-time holiday, the school will use ACT to issue a Penalty Notice to each parent/carer. Parents/carers who choose not to pay the Penalty Notice fine(s) within relevant time frames could face legal action in the Magistrates Court.

REGISTRATION

Type of registration

At The Stanway School we use Arbor as our electronic registration system. Form Tutors and class teachers ensure that registers are submitted at the beginning of the registration period and these are accessible in case of emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a student's absence will be collated and forwarded to the attendance officer for entering on the Arbor system.

Start & Close of registration

Registration begins at 8.40am and at the beginning of Period 4 each school day. Registers will be closed 20 minutes after these times.

If a student arrives after the morning register has closed, they should report to Student Services to be recorded as late. Students arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

It is important to note that when a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and pivotal career information and guidance. The table below shows how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage students and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year Which means this number of lessons missed
5 minutes	3 Days 15 lessons
10 minutes	6 Days 30 lessons
15 minutes	9 days 45 lessons

Use of symbols

The following symbols are used in registers:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/ Present (AM)	Present	
\ Present (PM)	Present	
B	Education off site	Approved Education Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/ description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (at another educational establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Suspension (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical or Dental Appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/ description)	
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to Students	Not counted in possible attendances

The legal status of registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording students' attendance or absence and in the latter if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failure to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a student.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic year.

Staff responsible for processes

A dedicated attendance officer is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

The form tutor is responsible for taking the register daily and for submitting it on time, once for the AM Registration session and once for the Afternoon Tutor session.

It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to take the PM Registration session accurately at the beginning of Period 4. The Class Teacher is responsible for submitting the register on time.

The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in service training on registration regulations and education law.

Each student should be called by name when the register is being taken. A student must not be marked as present unless physically seen by the Tutor/Class Teacher.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

It is the responsibility of the Parent/Carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence and if an absence continues into a new week. If this contact is not made then the attendance officer will ordinarily contact by text message or telephone.

If no contact is made, a telephone call may be made or a text message sent to parents requesting confirmation of Absence.

If there is still no response, the absence is unauthorised.

A home visit may be carried out for students where unauthorised/unexplained absences become a concern. If this is the case then this is likely to be carried out by Aquinas, a

member of the Senior Leadership or Pastoral team. There may be times where the aforementioned are not able to attend a welfare check in which case, we may request support from our Police liaison officer.

Attendance is reviewed every week by the Attendance Officer, Assistant/Heads of Year and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

A report is produced of every student whose attendance has fallen below expectation in the previous week and this is sent to the Head of Year. Where appropriate, letters, telephone calls, home visits and school-based meetings are implemented to address the issue and Aquinas may support the school in delivering this. If the student's difficulties are not resolved by these methods then a referral may be made to the ACT who will undertake a formal assessment. Where attendance does not improve then parents may be liable to legal action.

If the student is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there may be provision to allow the student to ease back into the school system.

A weekly late report is generated for each HOY or AHOY so that appropriate action can be taken and parents will be contacted if there is a persistent issue.

Where a student is persistently late the school will write to the parent/carer informing them that late arrivals after registers close will be recorded as unauthorised absences. The school will also issue detentions and operate a student reporting system for lateness.

Unauthorised absence

By law, the final decision regarding the authorisation of a student's absence from school is the responsibility of the school and not the parent/carer. The School will only authorise persistent absence from school (characterised by the Government as less than 90% attendance) with medical evidence that is current.

This is not an exhaustive list however, examples of when an absence may be recorded as unauthorised are:

- Minor ailments - these can often be treated with over the counter remedies and there is no need to remain absent from school. These include headache, cold symptoms, sore throats, coughs and aches and pains
- Shopping, hair issues or similar
- Missed bus, slept late or equivalent
- No uniform or issues regarding uniform
- Looking after brothers and sisters, unwell parents or minding the house
- Birthdays

- Unapproved holidays

Where attendance becomes a concern it may be necessary for the school, Aquinas or the ACT to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence for example:

- Appointment cards/letters/surgery stamp in student's planner on relevant day
- Medical certificate
- Letter from GP
- Copy of a prescription/prescribed medicines (where the prescription is for an illness that would ordinarily prevent attendance at school)

If a student approaches a block of 10 unauthorised days and contact with parents/carers cannot be made, a student may be reported missing in education to the local authority so that appropriate welfare checks can be made. Referrals may be made sooner where there are safeguarding concerns.

Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement, school prospectus and annual report from the Governors.

The school will keep parents informed of their child's attendance through newsletters, parent's evenings and student reports.

Parents, students and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Parents will be informed of concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Students who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

Any issues, which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties, will be promptly investigated by the school (refer to Anti-bullying Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy)

The school Attendance Officer or designated member of SLT will have regular meetings with the Heads of Year/ Assistant Heads of Year, in order to identify and support those students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Form Tutors will regularly promote the benefit of attendance to school and will have positive conversations with individuals who begin to show concerns

Students will have an opportunity to regularly review their own attendance during form time and will have an opportunity to reflect on their attendance when applying for Stanway Standard Awards.

The school will recognise good attendance.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.