



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Person Responsible for Policy ____ Deputy Headteacher
Date Policy Reviewed ____ September 2023

Rationale

Stephenson Studio School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

- We endeavor to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.
- For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.
- Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect national targets as a minimum standard.
- The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy contains within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a named member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Punctuality is of the utmost importance at Stephenson Studio School. Morning registration will take place at 8.45am at the start of the school day, students will receive a late mark if they are not in their class by this time. Registers will remain open until 9.15am, any student arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence. Exceptional circumstances for lateness will be looked at on an individual basis.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorized absence code will be entered.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Informing Us of absence

We request that on each day of absence parents contact the school as early as possible to make us aware of the student's absence and the reason so that we can accurately code the register.

The school's Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers by phone/text if we haven't received any contact.

Parents/carers will need to inform the school each day of the absence unless we have been made aware by medical evidence or a pre-agreed arrangement that the student will not be in school for a set amount of time.

If we haven't received contact from parent/carer and the student is absent for 3 days, the school will endeavor to make a home visit to check the child is safe and well. Where there is no response, we will leave a letter requesting that parents contact the school with the reason for absence. Home visits will be repeated if the child still does not attend and parents have not contacted the school.

Ten Days of Absence

Students absent for 10 consecutive school days without explanation will be referred to Leicestershire County Council as a CME child (Children Missing Education). The school will give the Local Authority details of the action taken and the whereabouts of the student will then be investigated by them.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of each student's Tutor to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

Stephenson Studio School aim for 96% attendance; if attendance falls below this, we will contact parents to try to resolve any problems preventing regular attendance.

If there are medical reasons for poor attendance, we will refer to the School Health Advisor and will ask parents for medical evidence from the professional caring for your child. One of the reasons for this, is to enable extra support from the Local Authority or other outside agencies, all of whom will not support referrals without evidence.

Any student missing 10% of schooling is classed as persistent absentee (PA).

The attendance team will monitor all students' attendance on a weekly basis and hold a bi-weekly meeting of the full team. In this meeting, all students with attendance of less than 90% will be discussed. Letters will be sent to these parents, warning them of the consequences of poor attendance on the child. After three consecutive letters, parents will be required to attend an Attendance Review Meeting where reasons for poor attendance will be reviewed and support put in place where appropriate.

If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, a referral to the Pupil Services Court Team at Leicestershire County Council will be made, which may result in a Penalty Notice or Prosecution under the Education Act 1996.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence, that all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students. The student's tutor will ensure this happens.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Students will be celebrated for good attendance in school assemblies and on the attendance notice board.

Holidays in term time

Following updated government guidance in 2013 parents have no entitlement to take students out of school for a holiday in term time.

Requests for term-time holidays must be made in advance to the school's attendance officer by e-mail or letter. Each request will be reviewed individually and will only be authorised if the Headteacher considers it be for exceptional circumstances. Additional evidence may be required to support the request. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be coded as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to parents. The school can request a Penalty Notice be issued from the Pupil Services Court Team at Leicestershire County Council. A Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, to be paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale would mean the fine rising to £120 to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid, parents may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A letter will be sent to all parents at the beginning of the school year to clarify that holidays during term time will not be authorized.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the Behavior for Learning rewards criteria to reward students who have good or improving attendance.

Students missing from lessons

The school will make contact with any parent whose child is missing from a lesson during a day where they have previously received a present mark, if there is no reason for the child to be missing. (i.e. the attendance officer has not been alerted to the child's absence for a pre-arranged appointment etc.) If the attendance officer is not able to make contact with a parent or carer the Police will be contacted.

Students who need to leave school during the school day

Any student needing to leave the school during the normal day MUST report to the Attendance Officer and sign out. Students cannot be allowed off the school site without notification from parents. The school would prefer this to be in writing for pre-arranged appointments, however, in the case of illness or emergency appointments will make telephone/text contact with parents/carers to ensure there is an adult at home to take charge of the student.

Medical appointments

As far as possible medical appointments should be booked outside of school hours. Where this is not possible an appointment card or letter should be provided to the school as evidence so that the appropriate medical absence mark can be used. Students should attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
 - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Student Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration