

ATTENDANCE POLICY



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School Role:	Deputy Head
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1. Purpose

Each student is welcomed, valued and respected and encouraged to respect themselves and others. We aim to empower all students to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for life. We believe that education is essential for all. To achieve their full potential students, need to attend regularly and punctually. Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance, it is essential that early action is taken.

2. Roles and Responsibility

The aim of the policy is to promote the most effective education for students at Stafford Hall School. To achieve this, it is vital that students attend school consistently and punctually. In order that students and carers/parents co-operate with this policy and students gain their full entitlement to education, carers/parents will be informed of the requirement on attendance.

3. Carer/Parent responsibility

Adults have a primary role in ensuring the attendance of students. Good examples of attendance and timekeeping by staff and carers/parents provide role models for students. Carers/parents are notified regularly via letters and newsletters about the importance of attendance and timekeeping, and their responsibility in ensuring regular attendance and the importance of notifying absences to school.

At Stafford Hall School contact between carer/parent and school is encouraged in order to account for absences. This may take the form of verbal messages through the through letters, emails or telephone calls. Office staff will call or text carers/parents to establish why a student is absent on the morning of the first day of absence once all registers have been completed. Office staff will notify the class teacher who can then complete their register electronically

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

It is for the school, not the carer/parent, to decide whether to authorise any absences.

The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no carer/parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances.)
- For shopping trips.
- For leisure days out.
- Where it is believed a carer/parent is condoning an unnecessary absence.
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation

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5. Leave of Absence

Requests for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher. In the case of absence for family holidays these will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. At Stafford Hall School a Leave of Absence request form should be obtained from the main office and be completed and sent into school before any arrangements are made.

Absence for the observance of a religious festival will be authorised for a maximum of two days per school year.

Approval for extended holidays abroad, in the family's home country, will only be considered on receipt of a written request and completion of the school's Holiday Request Form, and only then in exceptional circumstances. Only the Headteacher can authorise this – in conjunction with the placing authority. If consent is given it will be for a maximum period of 6 weeks with an agreed return date. If the student fails to attend after this period, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to the placing authority.

6. Change of address and other contact details

Carers/Parents must inform the school immediately if they, or the named emergency contacts have a change of address, phone number or email address. In case of emergency, we must be able to contact the carers/parents, or a third named person. Carers/Parents must provide this information when they first register their child and keep information including telephone numbers up to date.

7. School Procedure

Morning registers close at 9.30am except on days of particularly inclement weather, when the Headteacher may declare that the school should close registers at 10am.

Class teachers should carry out ongoing monitoring of both attendance and punctuality. First day absence calls are made by office staff as soon as the registers have been completed for all day students. The register is amended to show the reason for the absence. A message will be left on the home phone/mobile phone if we are unable to speak to carers/parents about their child's absence and logged onto Sleuth.

For day students, If no contact is made with the carers/parents by the second day a "Safe and Well" visit will be made. If no one is at home every attempt will be made to find further information i.e. from neighbours and Emergency Contacts.

If no progress is made, we will contact the Placing Authority and/or Social Worker to report the child as missing by the end of the 2nd day of absence.

If a child returns to school where no contact has been able to have been made during the absence, the carers/parents will receive a letter from the Headteacher reiterating the school procedures for student absence.

All unauthorised absences are discussed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and appropriate action is agreed at this meeting. In cases of frequent or long-term absences a decision will be made at the SLT on appropriate next steps.

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If a carer/parent contacts the school to say a child is ill and will be off for a week the school will do a "Safe and Well" check after the fourth day, completing an in person visit, or taking report from other professionals that may visit the home during this time, such as social work or CAMHS.

8. Children out of school for long periods

Stafford Hall School will work with the families of children who have extended time out of school. We will work with the families and the children to successfully enable them to come back to school. A combination of family contact by phone, home or hospital visits, provision of relevant school work and virtual contact with school staff and students will be provided to support the student in order that they:

- Retain/Begin contact with the school, their teachers, and peers and
- They keep up to date with as much of their schoolwork as possible.

9. Children protection concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps.

10. Attendance Plans

Where a student's attendance falls below 90% for non-illness related absences, the school will decide on the next step. This may be in the form of an Attendance Plan or an alternative support plan – in conjunction with the placing authority and the carers/parents. This will take account the pupils' needs, patterns of behaviour and form a supportive measure aimed at engaging the pupil in full time education as soon as is possible.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The DSL is responsible for monitoring attendance within school on a weekly basis and reporting concerns to the Headteacher. The Headteacher is also responsible for monitoring overall attendance within the school and will report each term to the School Governing Body.

Register Entries:

Attendance codes used will be as detailed within the Department for Education Statutory Guidance: Working together to improve school attendance published in August 2024