Attendance Policy

This policy applies to Steephill School, including the EYFS setting.

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Date reviewed by author: September 2024

Next review due: September 2026

Contents

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Aims

• Steephill School is committed to providing the best possible educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to fully benefit from education, regular attendance is vital, and we will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

• At Steephill we celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

• We will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and of course a legal responsibility. There is a need to establish strong home/school links and communication systems that we can utilise whenever there is concern about attendance.

• If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will identify, investigate, and work in partnership with parents, pupils, and other agencies to resolve problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a focused intervention aimed at returning the pupil to full-time attendance.

•Helen Millward, the Headteacher, has oversight for whole school attendance. She is responsible for ensuring registers are completed accurately, communication is made with parents where clear concerns exist, liaison is carried out with the Attendance Service and other appropriate agencies, the Headteacher is briefed about attendance issues, statistical returns for legitimate agencies are made as and when they are required, and records of concerns are kept.

Parents should note that 'It is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child is receiving a fulltime education in accordance with Section 7 Education Act 1996.

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

• Promoting good punctuality.

• Reducing absence, including persistent (96% and under) and severe absence (50% and under)

• 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

2. Legislation/guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the guidance [Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#) 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 [Education Act 1996](#)

• Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 [Education Act 2002](#)

• Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

•This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. [Complete the school census - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Definitions

(a) Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from School for a legitimate reason and the School has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones and email the School office to explain the absence.

- Only the School can establish an absence as authorised.

Examples of Authorised Absence:

- Hospital or Orthodontist appointment supported with appointment letter.
- Funeral.
- Reported Illness of 3 days or less.
- Illness of 5 or more days, usually supported with medical evidence.
- Emergency Doctor or Dental appointments (evidence required) (Routine appointments should be made outside of School hours whenever possible).
- Religious festival.

9b) Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from School without the permission of the School.

- Unauthorised absence can be where the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.
- If the School has not given permission for leave of absence, or if a child is kept away for longer than the agreed period of absence, this will be classed as unauthorised.
- If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance the absence is recorded as unauthorised and cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence:

- Leave of Absence NOT approved by School.
- Absence NOT reported on the day or supported by written explanation upon return to School. Routine Doctor/Dental appointments.
- Arriving late after registers have closed.
- Reported Illness NOT authorised by the School.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is responsible for:

• Promoting the importance of school attendance and punctuality 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 and punctuality for the whole school

• Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

• Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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 and punctuality strategies

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 and comparisons to national data

• Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance and punctuality identified through data

• Evaluating targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 Designated staff dealing with attendance

Staff dealing with attendance are responsible for:

• Monitoring and analysing attendance data

• 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 the ISA and Local Authority to address attendance concerns, including persistent absence and punctuality

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

• Recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office as soon as possible after morning and afternoon registration

• As a legal document, registers are kept electronically. Any child arriving after the registers have closed, are late and a late mark is recorded on Engage

• Consistently promoting high attendance expectations with children and parents

• Arranging conversations and meetings with parents where a child's attendance is becoming a concern

Where concerns persist, teachers should liaise with a Senior Leader where appropriate. Further action will be agreed to address the concerns, as outlined under 'Procedures'

3.6 TAs

TAs are responsible for:

• Consistently promoting high attendance expectations with children and parents.

• Supporting teachers to have informal conversations with parents where a child's attendance is becoming a concern.

3.7 School office staff

School office staff will:

• Take calls, emails, and other communication from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system and CPOMS

• Carry out first day calling when no message has been received by the parent

• Ensure any notes received from parents are recorded on the child's attendance record on Engage

• Liaise with relevant staff about attendance concerns

• Produce attendance data as required

3.8 Other school staff

Other school staff will:

•Welcome children back to school

•Consistently promote high attendance

3.9 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

• Make sure their child attends school every day and on time

• Call the school office on 01474 702107 to report their child's absence by the start of the school day on the first day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence as required), and advise when they are expected to return

• 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

• Not remove their child from school for a leave of absence including a holiday

3.10 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

• Attend school every day on time

Poor attendance disadvantages children. We aim to ensure that the children attend regularly and on time, and where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts is set each year by our average attendance figure.

While 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Such attendance is, where it occurs, clearly "excellent". On the other hand, attendance, which falls below 96%, where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there are no other extenuating circumstances, is poor and should give cause for concern. To ascertain the levels of individual children's attendance, we aim to ensure that a complete registration

check is undertaken every week, and where there is cause for concern, appropriate action shall be taken.

4. Principles

• Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

• Complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and at the beginning of each afternoon.

• Encourage parents/carers to contact staff early on the first day of absence.

• Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.

• Work to ensure parents/carers recognise their vital role, and legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance.

• Identify, investigate, and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils, and other agencies to resolve barriers to attendance.

• Provide appropriate support, signposting and referrals to outside agencies for any child requiring additional wellbeing or mental health support.

• Ensure that all staff are aware of their individual responsibility regarding school attendance.

• Attendance procedures will be regularly evaluated by senior staff and Governors.

• Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued, send a clear message that if a pupil has been absent, they will be offered opportunities to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

5. Procedures

• It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent, before the start of the school day. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that the child is safe. Parents/carers should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning.

• First day calling. If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, the school will contact the parent by telephone or other method of

communication as appropriate, including the use of text messaging if phone calls are not answered.

• If a child remains unaccounted for, staff will make a home visit as appropriate, taking into account any safeguarding concerns for the child.

• DSLs meet regularly, with the school secretary to monitor and review whole school attendance and individual pupils whose attendance is either declining, persistently absent or at risk of becoming persistently absent, severely absent or at risk of becoming severely absent. Attendance and absence data is regularly reviewed together with emerging and historic patterns, to identify pupils or classes that need additional support with their attendance, and this analysis is used to provide targeted support to pupils and their families.

• Letters will be sent to parents to alert them to their child's attendance where this is declining and/or a cause for concern.

• In addition, regular attendance review meetings may result in home visits undertaken by staff, or parents being invited in for a more formal meeting with a Senior Leader as appropriate.

• The school will work with parents to identify barriers, agree a plan of action, and offer appropriate school support, signposting, involvement of other agencies e.g. Early Help. The school will also implement other statutory interventions where appropriate including Attendance and Punctuality Contracts and Notices to Improve.

• The school will also ensure they plan and implement appropriate support to address any identified needs of the child, including SEN, disabilities, or mental or physical ill health.

• Requests for medical evidence will be made for absence due to illness if the school considers the level of attendance and/or illness to be of concern.

• Absence will be authorised for events such as illness, where medical evidence may be requested, and religious observance. It is the school who must decide whether to authorise absence, not the parent/carer.

• Pupils leaving school during the day for any reason, such as for medical appointments, must be collected by the parent/carer in person from the school office. The parent/carer should sign their child out using the signing in/out register. Parents/carers should sign their child back in again using the same system if they are returning. Parents/carers should also provide school with written evidence of medical appointments if requested.

• Attendance figures for the year are reported in every pupil's Annual School Report, including the total number of missed school days/weeks.

• Specific punctuality letters are sent to parents where this a concern and meetings arranged as appropriate.

• General attendance and lateness reminders are included in regular school newsletters and communication with parents/carers.

Term Time Leave of Absence or Holiday

• At Steephill School we do not permit leaves of absence during term time. Please note that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into effect on 1st September 2013 makes it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

• If a parent/carer wishes to request leave for exceptional circumstances, they should make a written application at the earliest opportunity. The Headteacher will consider each request and inform the parent/carer as soon as possible in writing, whether the request has been granted or not. Where permission has been refused and the parent/carer proceeds with a leave of absence, this is recorded as unauthorised leave.

• An absence from school may be authorised by the Headteacher when it is felt that the educational/social benefit of being away from school outweighs the obvious detriment to progression. This would need to be an 'exceptional circumstance' (e.g. a special family event such as a wedding or funeral, or observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs). If a parent would like to request absence, a form should be submitted in advance stating the reason for the request (form available from the school office). Any retrospective applications will not be authorised and the time out of School will be classed as 'unauthorised absence'.

6. Steephill School Expectations

Steephill School Information	
The start of the school day is:	**08.45**
Registers close at:	**09.00**
Children who arrive after 09.00	**Will receive a late mark L code by the school office when they sign in**
The end of the school day is staggered according to classes:	**3.00 EYFS** **3.15 KS1** **3.30 Lower KS2** **3.45 Upper KS2**
Children who have an older sibling can attend sibling care until their older sibling dismissal time**.** Children who attend After School Care must be taken to the Oatley Building.	
How to request a leave of absence	
In writing to the office FAO, The Headteacher:	**Secretary@steephill.co.uk**
Concerns regarding attendance should initially be addressed with: Any further concerns should be addressed with:	Your child's class teacher in the first instance **A DSL: Helen Millward, Claire Ross, Sarah Spender**
The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is:	**Helen Millward** **Headteacher**

7. Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and Attendance Service where appropriate.

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

• If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.

• The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area, but no file transfers have been requested by another school.

Also see Child Protection Policy.

8. Elective Home Education

If a parent advises they wish to educate their child at home, all procedures should be followed **see Appendix A.**

Appendix A - Elective Home Education Request

This form should be initiated when a parent advises they wish to home educate their child and withdraw them from attending Steephill School on a full-time basis.

Elective Home Education Request	
Name of child: **Year Group:**	
Action	**Completed by**
Initial conversation with parent and appropriate staff member Discuss reasons for home educating – any issues should be attempted to be resolved and notified to the HT immediately. Signpost parents to EHE service for further advice and guidance to enable them to make an informed decision. Add all info to CPOMS.	
Arrange a meeting for parents with HT to discuss further, including any SEN or safeguarding concerns. The meeting should include the expectations of parents should they decide to home educate. Also provide parents with Local Authority EHE leaflet/information. Kent: Home education information Add all info to CPOMS.	
Parent to provide written confirmation of the decision to home educate.	
Discuss any safeguarding and SEN concerns with HT. Consider if a Front Door Referral is required if there are specific safeguarding concerns. If the child has an EHCP, consult with the LA SEN department before making an EHE referral.	

After agreement from the HT, EHE referral made to the Local Authority together with parent's letter. Safeguarding and SEN information should be included in referral Add all info to CPOMS.	
Letter to be sent to parents confirming their request, support offered and submission of EHE.	
Advise school office staff.	
Once completed, keep this form in a secure file for future reference.	

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Appendix C – National codes for absence

/ \ - present for morning and afternoon sessions.

The following are classified as authorised absence:

I – Illness.

M – Attending medical/dental appointment.

C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

R – Religious observance.

E – Suspended or permanently excluded.

T – Parent travelling for occupational purposes.

S – Study leave.

C1 – Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

J1 – Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.

C2 – Pupil is absent from school for part of the week (on a part-time timetable) – then also use the code for the reason why absent.

The following are NOT classified as absences:

B – An offsite educational activity.

K – Alternative provision arranged by the LA.

L – Late arrival before the register is closed (during the 30 mins 'grace' period).

P – Approved sporting activity.

V – Attending an educational visit or trip.

W – Work experience.

The following are classified as unauthorised absence:

G – Holiday not granted by the school.

N – Reason for absence not yet established.

O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances.

U – Arrived in school after the register closed (after 30 mins 'grace' period).

The following are classified as 'not a possible attendance':

D – Dual registration, so attending another school where registered.

X – Pupils of non-compulsory school age absent when they are not timetabled to attend (e.g. EYFS).

Q – Lack of access arrangements by LA.

Y1 – Transport normally provided not being available.

Y2 – Widespread disruption to travel.

Y3 – Part of school premises being closed.

Y4 – Whole school site being unexpectedly closed.

Y5 – Pupil is in criminal justice detention.

Y6 – Public health guidance or law not to attend.

Y7 – Any other unavoidable cause (this includes absence due to non-payment of fees)