



Attendance Policy

Applies to: Steephill School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision

Policy owner: Headteacher

Designated Attendance Lead: Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Headteacher

Date approved: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Status: Statutory guidance / school policy

1. Policy Statement

Steephill School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which every pupil can thrive.

Regular attendance is fundamental to pupils' educational achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and preparation for the next stage of their education. Every day and every session matters.

The school expects pupils to attend regularly, arrive punctually and be ready to learn. We recognise, however, that barriers to attendance can be complex and that some pupils and families may require additional support.

In accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance, the school has appointed Mrs Helen Millward, Headteacher, as the Senior Attendance Champion. She can be contacted upon head@steephill.co.uk

Mrs Millward provides strategic leadership for attendance across the school and ensures that attendance is regarded as everyone's responsibility. She works closely with staff, pupils, parents and external agencies to promote excellent attendance, remove barriers to attendance and ensure that every child receives the support they need to achieve their full potential.

Our approach is therefore:

Listen → Understand → Support → Act

We will work positively and collaboratively with pupils and parents to understand barriers to attendance, remove those barriers wherever reasonably possible and take appropriate action where attendance does not improve.

Attendance is also a safeguarding matter. Changes in attendance, patterns of absence, persistent absence, severe absence or unexplained absence may indicate that a child is experiencing difficulties or may be at risk of harm. Attendance information will therefore be considered alongside safeguarding, pastoral, SEND and wellbeing information.

This policy applies to all pupils registered at Steephill School, including pupils in EYFS where applicable. Statutory attendance and registration requirements apply particularly to pupils of compulsory school age; however, Steephill promotes regular attendance and accurate recording for all pupils.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the legislation and statutory guidance in force at the date of approval, including:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026);**
- **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**, DfE statutory guidance, updated July 2026;
- **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;**
- **Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools**, updated September 2025;
- **Education Act 1996;**
- **Education and Inspections Act 2006;**
- **Children Act 1989;**
- **Children Act 2004;**
- **Equality Act 2010;**
- **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;**
- **Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions;**
- **Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework;**
- **Independent School Standards Regulations 2014**, as amended;
- current DfE guidance and attendance codes; and
- relevant Kent County Council attendance and Children Missing Education procedures.

The school will also have regard to **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026** and relevant local safeguarding arrangements.

KCSIE 2026 is in force from 1 September 2026 and applies to independent schools. All Steephill staff are required to read Part One of KCSIE 2026 and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

The DfE's attendance guidance is statutory guidance for independent schools as well as maintained schools and academies.

3. Aims

Steephill School aims to:

1. promote excellent attendance and punctuality;
2. establish a whole-school culture in which attendance is valued;
3. ensure pupils and parents understand the importance of regular attendance;
4. identify barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity;
5. provide appropriate support to pupils and families;
6. identify attendance patterns which may indicate safeguarding concerns;
7. accurately record attendance in accordance with statutory requirements;
8. identify and respond to persistent and severe absence;
9. ensure that attendance procedures are inclusive and do not unlawfully discriminate;
10. work effectively with parents, professionals and the local authority;
11. identify and respond appropriately to Children Missing Education (CME);
12. use attendance information to inform school improvement;
13. ensure that attendance practice supports pupils with SEND, disabilities and medical or mental health needs; and
14. take proportionate action where support does not result in improved attendance.

4. Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

Where a child is registered at Steephill School, parents are expected to:

- ensure that their child attends school every day that they are expected to attend;
- ensure that their child arrives on time and is ready to learn;
- notify the school promptly on the first day of absence, giving the reason for absence;
- provide further information or evidence where reasonably requested;
- inform the school of any circumstances which may affect attendance;
- work collaboratively with the school where attendance becomes a concern;
- attend meetings relating to attendance where requested;
- support agreed attendance improvement plans; and
- inform the school immediately of any change of address, contact details or circumstances affecting the child's education.

Parents should not routinely arrange family holidays during term time.

5. School Responsibilities

Steephill School will:

- maintain an accurate admission register;
- maintain an accurate attendance register;
- record attendance and absence using the statutory attendance codes;
- monitor attendance daily;
- identify pupils whose attendance is declining;
- identify pupils who are persistently or severely absent;
- analyse attendance patterns and trends;
- consider attendance alongside safeguarding and pastoral information;
- communicate concerns promptly to parents;
- provide appropriate support to overcome barriers;
- make reasonable adjustments where required by law;
- work with relevant professionals and agencies;
- make appropriate referrals to Kent County Council;
- follow Children Missing Education procedures where necessary;
- use legal enforcement processes where appropriate; and
- retain appropriate attendance records.

The school will maintain a whole-school culture which promotes the benefits of regular attendance and will make clear and consistent expectations to pupils and parents.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Board of Governors

The governing body will:

- ensure that the school has an effective attendance policy;
- monitor attendance at whole-school and pupil-group level;
- challenge leaders where attendance is declining;
- ensure that attendance is considered alongside safeguarding and welfare;
- ensure that statutory duties are met;
- ensure appropriate resources are available to address attendance barriers; and
- receive regular attendance reports from school leaders.

6.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for overall attendance leadership and will:

- implement this policy;
- ensure statutory requirements are met;
- monitor attendance data;
- ensure appropriate interventions are implemented;
- liaise with parents and external agencies;
- authorise or refuse absence where appropriate;
- make referrals to Kent County Council where necessary;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are acted upon;
- oversee Children Missing Education procedures; and
- ensure attendance is reported to the proprietor/governing body.

6.3 Designated Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead will:

- monitor daily attendance;
- follow up unexplained absence;
- identify emerging attendance concerns;
- monitor persistent and severe absence;
- maintain attendance records;
- communicate with parents;
- coordinate attendance support plans;
- maintain records of interventions and outcomes;
- liaise with the DSL where safeguarding concerns arise; and
- work with Kent County Council and other agencies as appropriate.

6.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will ensure that attendance concerns are considered as part of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Staff must recognise that:

A change in attendance may be a safeguarding indicator.

Concerns may include:

- unexplained or prolonged absence;
- sudden changes in attendance;
- repeated absence on particular days;
- repeated absence following particular incidents;
- patterns of lateness;
- a pupil regularly reporting illness;
- a child becoming withdrawn;
- a child missing from education;
- suspected neglect;
- domestic abuse;
- exploitation;
- bullying;
- mental health concerns;
- child-on-child abuse;
- online harms; or
- other indicators of vulnerability.

KCSIE 2026 specifically identifies changes in behaviour or attendance as potential safeguarding indicators.

Attendance concerns must therefore not be treated solely as an administrative issue where there may be an underlying safeguarding concern.

6.5 All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- accurately recording attendance;
- following up concerns appropriately;
- reporting safeguarding concerns;
- noticing changes in attendance and behaviour;
- contributing to a positive attendance culture; and
- following this policy.

7. Attendance Register

SteePhill will maintain an attendance register in accordance with the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**.

The attendance register records attendance and absence for each pupil for every session.

The school day is divided into two statutory sessions:

- morning; and
- afternoon.

The school will record attendance accurately and consistently using the national attendance and absence codes.

The 2024 Regulations introduced mandatory national attendance and absence codes to improve consistency and accuracy.

8. Attendance Codes

SteePhill will use the current statutory attendance codes.

Present

**/ or ** – Present at the school

L – Late before the register has closed

Authorised absence

C – Authorised absence in exceptional circumstances

C1 – Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad

C2 – Pupil absent due to other authorised circumstances

I – Illness

M – Medical or dental appointment

R – Religious observance

S – Study leave

T – Parent travelling for occupational purposes

E – Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

J1 – Interview for employment or another educational institution

Unauthorised absence

- G** – Holiday taken in term time without permission
- N** – Reason for absence not yet established
- O** – Absent for another unauthorised reason
- U** – Arrived after the register closed

Approved educational activity

- B** – Attending any approved educational activity
- D** – Dual registered at another school
- K** – Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- P** – Participating in a sporting activity
- V** – Educational visit or trip
- W** – Work experience

Unable to attend

- Q** – Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access to transport provided by the local authority
- Y1–Y7** – Unable to attend because of specified exceptional circumstances
- Z** – Pupil not yet on roll

The school will ensure that the precise statutory definitions applicable to each code are followed and will update administrative systems whenever DfE coding requirements change.

9. First-Day Response to Absence

Parents are expected to notify the school of absence on the first day of absence and provide the reason.

Where a pupil is absent without an explanation:

1. the school will contact the parent/carer as soon as reasonably practicable;
2. if contact cannot be established, further contact will be attempted;
3. the school will consider whether the absence presents a safeguarding concern;
4. appropriate welfare checks will be undertaken where necessary; and
5. unexplained absence will not simply be recorded indefinitely as illness.

Where a pupil cannot be located and there are safeguarding concerns, the DSL will determine whether further action or referral is required.

10. Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is an important safeguarding measure.

The school will consider:

- the duration of absence;
- frequency of absence;
- sudden changes;
- patterns;
- the reason for absence;
- the child's age;
- SEND;
- medical needs;
- mental health;
- family circumstances;
- previous safeguarding concerns;
- social care involvement;
- whether siblings are also absent; and
- whether the child can be located safely.

Where appropriate, information will be shared with safeguarding partners in accordance with KCSIE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the school's Child Protection Policy.

Data protection legislation will not be treated as a barrier to necessary safeguarding information sharing. KCSIE 2026 confirms that information should be shared where necessary to protect a child.

11. Persistent Absence

A pupil is classified as persistently absent (PA) when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions.

The threshold applies to authorised and unauthorised absence.

Attendance will be monitored from the beginning of the academic year and the school will not wait until a pupil formally reaches 10% absence before intervening.

For example, approximately 19 missed school days over a typical 190-day school year equates to 10% absence.

The DfE's current statistical definition identifies persistent absence at 10% or more missed sessions.

Where a pupil is approaching the PA threshold, the school will:

- contact parents;
- explore barriers;
- review attendance patterns;
- consider safeguarding;
- agree support where appropriate;
- set attendance expectations;
- monitor progress; and
- escalate where necessary.

12. Severe Absence

A pupil is considered severely absent (SA) when they miss 50% or more of their possible sessions.

Severe absence represents a significant risk to educational outcomes and may also represent a safeguarding concern.

The school will respond urgently to severe absence and will work with parents and relevant external agencies to understand and address the causes.

The DfE currently defines severe absence as missing 50% or more of possible sessions.

13. Early Intervention

Steephill will not use attendance thresholds as a substitute for professional judgement.

Where attendance is declining, the school will consider intervention before persistent absence develops.

Possible interventions include:

- informal discussion with parents;
- meeting with the pupil;
- pastoral support;
- attendance monitoring;
- attendance improvement plans;
- reasonable adjustments;
- SEND assessment/review;
- support for anxiety or emotional barriers;
- liaison with medical professionals;
- early help;
- Family Help;
- referral to appropriate local authority services;
- safeguarding referral; and
- external specialist support.

14. Attendance Improvement Plans

Where attendance is causing concern, the school may establish an Attendance Improvement Plan.

This may include:

- current attendance percentage;
- attendance concerns;
- identified barriers;
- actions to be taken by school;
- actions to be taken by parents;
- pupil voice;
- reasonable adjustments;

- review date;
- expected improvement; and
- escalation arrangements.

Attendance plans will be proportionate and child-centred.

15. SEND, Disability and Medical Needs

Steephill recognises that pupils with SEND, disabilities and medical or mental health conditions may experience barriers to attendance.

The school will:

- seek to understand individual barriers;
- consult with parents and pupils where appropriate;
- work with the SENCO;
- review reasonable adjustments;
- consider accessibility;
- liaise with health professionals where appropriate;
- consider sensory, physical, communication and emotional needs;
- review support plans;
- consider whether the curriculum or environment is creating barriers; and
- avoid treating disability-related absence as a disciplinary issue without first considering the underlying need.

The school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and have regard to the SEND Code of Practice.

A pupil will not be disadvantaged because of a disability or protected characteristic.

16. Mental Health and Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Where a pupil experiences anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance or other mental health difficulties affecting attendance, the school will seek to understand the underlying causes.

Support may include:

- a trusted adult;
- pastoral support;
- phased reintegration;
- adjustments to arrival arrangements;
- safe spaces;
- adapted transitions;
- access to external support;
- liaison with parents;
- SENCO involvement;
- medical advice; and
- a structured reintegration plan.

The school will maintain high expectations while ensuring that support is appropriate to the pupil's individual circumstances.

17. Medical Absence

Illness is an authorised reason for absence where the pupil is genuinely unable to attend.

Parents should notify the school as soon as possible.

The school may request additional information where absence becomes prolonged, frequent or concerning.

Where a pupil is likely to be absent due to illness for **15 or more consecutive school days**, the school will consider its obligations to notify the local authority in accordance with the 2024 Regulations and relevant guidance.

The school will also consider whether alternative education arrangements or other support are required.

18. Medical Appointments

Parents should arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever reasonably possible.

Where this is not possible, the school may authorise the absence.

Parents should provide evidence of the appointment where reasonably requested.

Where possible, pupils should attend school before and/or after appointments.

19. Religious Observance

The school may authorise absence where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil or their parent belongs.

The school will consider requests sensitively and consistently.

20. Holidays During Term Time

Parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised where the Headteacher considers that exceptional circumstances apply, in accordance with statutory attendance guidance.

Requests for leave of absence must be submitted in advance and will be considered on an individual basis. Where exceptional circumstances are cited, parents will be required to provide supporting evidence to enable the Headteacher to assess the request. This may include, for example, evidence relating to significant family events, such as a family wedding.

Family holidays, including holidays taken for reasons of convenience or financial considerations, will not normally be considered exceptional circumstances and will not ordinarily be authorised.

Where leave is taken without authorisation, the absence will normally be recorded using code **G**.

21. Punctuality

Punctuality is an important part of attendance.

Pupils should arrive in sufficient time to enter school calmly and be ready for learning.

Where a pupil arrives after the start of the school day but before the register closes, the appropriate late code will be recorded.

Where a pupil arrives after the register has closed, the absence will normally be recorded using code **U**, unless another statutory code applies.

Persistent lateness may:

- reduce learning time;
- affect wellbeing;
- contribute to overall absence;
- be a safeguarding indicator; and
- trigger attendance intervention.

22. Children Missing Education (CME)

A child is considered a Child Missing Education where they are of compulsory school age, are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.

Steephill will take active steps to prevent pupils becoming CME.

The school will:

- monitor unexplained absence;
- make reasonable enquiries where a child cannot be located;
- maintain accurate contact information;
- obtain information regarding changes of address;
- work with Kent County Council;
- make appropriate notifications when pupils join or leave the school;
- follow the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024;
- follow local CME procedures; and
- refer cases to the appropriate local authority where necessary.

The September 2025 CME statutory guidance applies to independent schools and requires schools to monitor attendance and work with local authorities to identify children missing education.

Kent County Council provides a specific CME referral route and identifies CME as children of compulsory school age who are neither registered at a school nor receiving suitable education otherwise.

23. Removal from the Admission Register

Steephill will only remove a pupil from the admission register where one of the legally permitted circumstances applies.

The school will follow the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Where a pupil leaves the school unexpectedly, the school will make reasonable enquiries to establish:

- the pupil's whereabouts;
- the pupil's new address where known;
- the identity of the new school where applicable;
- whether the pupil is receiving suitable education; and
- whether there are safeguarding concerns.

Where required, the school will notify the relevant local authority.

The school will not remove a pupil from roll simply because they have been absent for a period of time.

24. Attendance Returns to Kent County Council

Steephill will comply with the attendance return requirements applicable to independent schools.

The 2024 Regulations require independent schools to provide specified attendance and pupil information to the relevant local authority at the required intervals.

The school will cooperate with Kent County Council and any other relevant local authority where a pupil lives outside Kent.

25. Attendance and Looked-After / Previously Looked-After Children

Where applicable, the school will work with the relevant professionals to support attendance for:

- looked-after children;
- previously looked-after children;
- children with social workers;
- children subject to child protection arrangements; and
- children receiving targeted early help.

Attendance concerns will be incorporated into wider support planning where appropriate.

26. Attendance and Safeguarding Vulnerability

The school will pay particular attention to attendance where a pupil:

- has an open safeguarding referral;
- is subject to a child protection plan;
- is known to children's social care;
- is experiencing domestic abuse;
- is at risk of exploitation;
- is vulnerable to criminal or sexual exploitation;
- has experienced bullying;
- has significant mental health difficulties;
- is experiencing family instability;
- is newly arrived in the UK;
- is at risk of becoming CME; or
- has other identified vulnerabilities.

The school will ensure attendance information contributes to the wider safeguarding picture.

27. Attendance Following Suspension

Where a pupil is suspended or permanently excluded, the school will follow its separate Behaviour and Exclusions procedures and the relevant statutory guidance.

Attendance will be recorded using the appropriate statutory code.

Where alternative provision or education is arranged, the school will ensure attendance is appropriately recorded and monitored.

28. Alternative Provision and Education Away From School

Where a pupil receives approved educational provision away from the school site, attendance will be recorded using the appropriate statutory code.

The school remains responsible for appropriate oversight of pupils whose education is arranged or commissioned by the school.

Safeguarding, attendance and educational progress will be monitored.

29. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

Steephill recognises that legal intervention is generally most effective where support has been attempted and attendance does not improve, although there may be circumstances where immediate escalation is appropriate.

Where a pupil's attendance does not improve despite appropriate support, the school may request that Kent County Council considers legal intervention.

This may include a **Penalty Notice** or prosecution.

Kent County Council currently states that a school can request a penalty notice where a child misses school without good reason. The current penalty is £160, reduced to £80 where paid within 21 days in the circumstances specified by Kent County Council.

The school will follow the current Kent County Council penalty notice threshold, criteria and procedures in force at the time rather than embedding potentially outdated thresholds in this policy.

Where appropriate, legal intervention may include:

- penalty notice;
- prosecution;
- Education Supervision Order;
- School Attendance Order; or
- other lawful intervention.

Kent County Council confirms that it may use Education Supervision Orders, School Attendance Orders and fines/prosecution where appropriate.

The school will ensure that any referral is supported by accurate attendance records and evidence of appropriate consideration of barriers and support.

30. Children with Complex or Significant Barriers

Where attendance is significantly affected by complex circumstances, the school may convene a multi-agency meeting.

This may include:

- parents;
- pupil;
- Headteacher;
- DSL;
- SENCO;
- Attendance Lead;
- GP or other health professional;
- children's social care;
- Early Help/Family Help;
- educational psychology;
- school nursing;
- local authority attendance support; and

- other appropriate professionals.

The aim will be to develop a coordinated plan that prioritises the child's welfare and access to education.

31. Equality and Inclusion

SteePhill is committed to ensuring that attendance procedures are fair, consistent and non-discriminatory.

The school will consider the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments where required.

Particular care will be taken where absence relates to:

- disability;
- medical needs;
- SEND;
- pregnancy or maternity;
- religious observance;
- protected characteristics; or
- other circumstances protected by law.

The school's approach will be supportive rather than punitive where a pupil is experiencing genuine barriers to attendance.

32. EYFS Attendance

SteePhill recognises the particular needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Although compulsory school-age attendance legislation does not apply to all EYFS pupils, the school expects regular attendance because continuity and consistency are important for:

- children's development;
- relationships;
- routines;

- communication;
- emotional security;
- learning; and
- safeguarding.

The school will maintain appropriate attendance records for EYFS pupils and will respond to unexplained or concerning absence.

Staff will consider changes in attendance or presentation alongside other safeguarding indicators.

Parents of EYFS pupils are expected to notify the school of absence and work with staff to support regular attendance.

33. Attendance Data and Monitoring

The school will monitor attendance:

- daily;
- weekly;
- half-termly;
- termly; and
- annually.

Analysis will consider:

- whole-school attendance;
- individual pupils;
- year groups;
- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- unauthorised absence;
- lateness;
- reasons for absence;
- SEND;
- disadvantaged pupils;
- children with social workers;

- safeguarding cohorts;
- gender;
- other relevant groups; and
- patterns across time.

The purpose of analysis is not simply to produce statistics but to identify pupils who require support and evaluate the impact of interventions.

The current independent school inspection framework expects leaders to analyse attendance information, identify causes of poor attendance, intervene early and remove barriers.

34. Attendance and Inspection

Steeptill recognises that attendance forms part of the school's wider responsibility for pupils' welfare, safeguarding, achievement and inclusion.

The school will retain evidence demonstrating:

- attendance analysis;
- attendance improvement work;
- interventions;
- parent communication;
- pupil voice;
- safeguarding consideration;
- SEND adjustments;
- external agency involvement;
- attendance plans;
- outcomes; and
- evaluation of the effectiveness of attendance strategies.

The current independent school inspection toolkit specifically requires inspectors to consider attendance and punctuality, including how leaders support pupils whose attendance is low and how they address barriers affecting pupils with SEND or medical needs.

35. Record Keeping

Attendance records and related correspondence will be maintained securely.

Records may include:

- attendance data;
- reasons for absence;
- communications with parents;
- attendance plans;
- meeting notes;
- interventions;
- referrals;
- professional advice;
- safeguarding considerations;
- local authority correspondence; and
- outcomes.

Safeguarding information will be recorded in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and safeguarding recording system.

Information will be retained in accordance with the school's data protection and records retention arrangements.

36. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Attendance information will be treated appropriately and confidentially.

Information may be shared with:

- parents/carers;
- the DSL;
- school staff who need the information;
- the SENCO;
- health professionals;
- children's social care;
- Kent County Council;

- other local authorities;
- police;
- safeguarding partners; and
- other agencies where lawful and necessary.

The school will comply with UK data protection legislation and the school's Privacy Notice.

Where information sharing is necessary to safeguard a child, staff will follow KCSIE 2026 and the school's safeguarding procedures.

37. Attendance Culture

Steephill will promote attendance positively.

We will:

- celebrate good attendance appropriately;
- recognise improved attendance;
- promote belonging;
- provide engaging learning;
- ensure pupils feel safe;
- respond to bullying;
- listen to pupil voice;
- communicate positively with parents;
- identify barriers early; and
- avoid practices which unfairly shame pupils for absence.

Attendance is a shared responsibility between pupils, parents, school and external partners.

38. Parent Communication

The school will communicate clearly with parents about:

- attendance expectations;
- punctuality;
- absence procedures;

- attendance data;
- emerging concerns;
- support available;
- attendance improvement plans;
- persistent/severe absence;
- legal intervention; and
- changes to statutory requirements.

The school will publish this policy on its website.

39. Complaints

Parents who have concerns about the implementation of this policy should initially raise the matter with the Headteacher.

Where concerns remain unresolved, parents may use the school's Complaints Policy.

Nothing within this policy prevents the school from taking appropriate safeguarding action where necessary.

40. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where:

- legislation changes;
- DfE statutory guidance changes;
- KCSIE is updated;
- Kent County Council changes its attendance procedures;
- attendance codes change;
- inspection requirements change; or
- operational experience indicates that amendments are necessary.

The next scheduled review is **September 2027**.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Intervention Framework

Steephill will use professional judgement rather than applying rigid thresholds.

Stage 1 – Emerging concern

Indicators may include:

- declining attendance;
- repeated lateness;
- patterns of absence;
- unexplained absence;
- attendance approaching 90–95%;
- concerns raised by staff or parents.

Action:

- monitor;
- communicate with parents;
- identify barriers;
- consider safeguarding;
- offer support.

Stage 2 – Significant concern

Indicators may include:

- attendance approaching persistent absence;
- repeated unexplained absence;
- continuing decline;
- recurring illness;
- repeated lateness;
- concerns about wellbeing.

Action:

- formal meeting;
- attendance improvement plan;
- pupil voice;

- SENCO/pastoral involvement;
- safeguarding review;
- external support where appropriate.

Stage 3 – Persistent absence

Attendance is **10% or more absent**.

Action:

- formal attendance plan;
- regular monitoring;
- multi-agency involvement where appropriate;
- consideration of Kent attendance support;
- clear expectations and review dates.

Stage 4 – Severe absence

Attendance is **50% or more absent**.

Action:

- urgent intervention;
- safeguarding assessment;
- multi-agency response;
- attendance support referral;
- consideration of legal intervention where appropriate.

Appendix 2 – Key Attendance Principles

At Steephill:

Every child matters.

Every session matters.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Absence may be a safeguarding indicator.

Support comes before escalation wherever appropriate.

SEND and disability-related barriers must be considered.

Parents and school must work together.

Persistent and severe absence require early and proportionate intervention.

Accurate attendance records are essential.

Children missing education must be identified and acted upon.

Appendix 3 – Key Statutory References

The school will maintain current copies/links to:

1. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
2. Working Together to Improve School Attendance – July 2026.
3. School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
4. Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools.
5. Equality Act 2010.
6. SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
7. Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.
8. Independent School Standards guidance.
9. Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.
10. Current Kent County Council attendance and CME procedures.

Where legislation or statutory guidance changes during the lifetime of this policy, Steephill will comply with the current legal requirements even where this policy has not yet been formally updated.