

# Stonegate C E Primary School



## Attendance Policy

<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Governors</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>September 2019</b>
<b>Reviewed / Amended</b>	<b>September 2020, September 2021, July 2022</b>
<b>Next Review</b>	<b>July 2023</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Head Teacher</b>

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Vision and Ethos**

**Stonegate Church of England Primary School is a community founded on Christian Values: Courage, Friendship, Respect and Trust embracing every child and their family. We provide a safe environment, where a lifetime love of learning begins, the whole child is nurtured and each child is valued and able to thrive.**

**Love of learning for life.**

***I came to give life — life in all its fullness. John 10:10***

We aim to offer children from all backgrounds an inspiring, aspiring and interesting curriculum, based on real experiences, which will encourage in the pupils a lifelong love of learning and an ambition to do well in anything they try.

### **Equal Opportunities**

At Stonegate CE Primary School we believe that all children, regardless of first language, disability, race, gender, cultural or socio-economic background, should receive equal access to the full school curriculum.

### **Disability Statement**

Stonegate CE Primary School is proud to be an inclusive school. We are able to offer access to the full curriculum for children who have a physical disability.

We have easy access into the main part of the building and have accessible toilet facilities within the school.

The school works closely with parents and appropriate outside agencies, to address any identified, additional needs.

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Stonegate CE Primary School by:

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

## **Principles**

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day (1 session) absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. We may ask for these to be supported with medical / other evidence.

**Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:**

- **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **truancy before or during the school day**
- **absences which have never been properly explained**
- **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

**Following a child's attendance dropping below 90%, a meeting, which may be formal or informal in nature, will be held to discuss any issues and support that may be required.**

**In order to ensure a child's attendance improves, the Headteacher may begin a '10 in 10', where 10 further unauthorised sessions (of any description) of absence within a 10 week period will result in a fixed penalty.**

## Procedures

**The school sets the target for attendance at 97% or above for each child.**

**Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age attend regularly.**

**Parents are also responsible for ensuring that children arrive on time.**

**Parents are also responsible for informing the School Office if their child is unwell.**

## The Beginning of the Day

- Children who walk to school, or those who are dropped off, should not arrive before 8:30am.
- The gate is opened at 8.30am each morning, parents can accompany their children to the rear playground.
- A bell is rung at 8.45am which signifies the start of the school day.
- Registers are called at the start of the morning session from 8.45am.
- Children are marked 'Late' if they arrive in the classroom after the register has been called.
- The 'Late' is marked as an "Unauthorised Absence" for this session if they do not arrive by the official 'close' of registers at 8.55am.
- **After five 'L' late marks, you will invited in for a meeting to discuss the school reducing the complimentary 10 minutes allowed before close of registers and any further arrival after an allotted time will be marked as 'U' unauthorised.**
- **If a child then accrues another 10 'Unauthorised Absence' marks (of any description) within a 10 week period this may result in a fixed penalty being issued.**
- Children arriving after the school gate is closed at 8.55am, must report to the school office to be signed in, using a sign in book.
- If a child has not arrived by the time of morning registration - and we have not received any advance notice of their absence - parents will be contacted by 9.30am to confirm that their child is supposed to be away.

## The End of the Day

- Parents who know they are going to be late collecting their child should contact the school as soon as possible.
- Children whose parents are late must wait in foyer by the office, with supervision.
- **Parents must inform the school office if another adult is collecting a child.** This must be in writing (using a letter or an email to the School Office – [office@stonegate.e-sussex.sch.uk](mailto:office@stonegate.e-sussex.sch.uk)) if this is a regular agreement.
- Parents must confirm in writing if a child is permitted to walk home.

## **Absences for Medical Reasons**

- **Parents MUST notify the school before 9.30am if their child is unwell. This process should be repeated every day of the absence.**
- If we do not receive confirmation of the reason for an absence it is marked as "Unauthorised".
- If possible, we would prefer advanced warning for medical appointments and other absences.

## **Absence for Holidays**

**Parents are strongly requested not to take holidays in term time.**

In line with East Sussex County Council Guidance, absences are only authorised in exceptional circumstances – holidays are not considered an exceptional circumstance.

**A fixed penalty notice may be issued to the parent / carer if a period of 10 sessions (5 days) or more of unauthorised holiday is taken.**

## **Procedure for Term Time Holidays**

1. Parents to complete and return an 'Absence request during term time request' – *Appendix 1.*
2. The Headteacher (or member of the Senior Leadership Team) makes the decision and school returns the completed form to the parent, keeping a full copy on file.
3. If the absence is unauthorised and subsequently taken, the 'Absence request during term time request' will be forwarded to the Legal Interventions Team at East Sussex County Council.

**Examples of exceptional circumstances are:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

**It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips or a 'regular' family holiday.**

**Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.**

## **Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- The School Office Team proactively contacting parents of children whose attendance has dropped below 90% to offer information, support and advice.
- **A meeting will be held with parents if a child's attendance declines below 90%. Within this meeting, the school may discuss the implementation of '10 in 10'. An agreement may be issued that results in a fixed penalty being served should your child have 10 unauthorised sessions of absence in 10 weeks.**
- Support Plans and Local Authority intervention if attendance falls below 85% - *Appendix 2*
- When appropriate, the school will use the website and newsletters to provide parents with information (reminders) relating to 'education time lost' through days off (absence) and lateness – *Appendix 3*
- Attendance of children on the Child Protection Register are monitored closely by the Headteacher.
- Attendance is reported to governors each term.

In the future, the school may consider adopting the following attendance project:

- Termly 'coloured' letters to parents informing them of their child's attendance.

## **Responsibility for Attendance**

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Jonathan Elms – Headteacher

Lucy Hazeldine – Deputy Headteacher and member of the Senior Leadership Team

Debra Keeler – School Secretary and member of the Senior Leadership Team

School attendance is monitored on behalf of the Governing Body by:

Kevin Millington – Chair of Governors

Jess Tabbah – Parent Governor

Phoebe Cameron – Foundation Governor

## **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## Appendix 1 – Holiday during term time request.



# Stonegate C of E Primary School

Station Road, Stonegate, East Sussex, TN5 7EN

Headteacher: Mr Jonathan Elms

## Love of Learning for Life

I came to give life — life in all its fullness. John 10:10



### **ABSENCE REQUEST DURING TERM TIME**

#### NOTICE TO PARENTS / CARERS

Dear Parents / Carers

The Department for Education (DfE) has amended the regulations and guidance in relation to absences in term-time. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, government legislation no longer enables head teachers to authorise requests for leave for children to be taken out of school unless there are considered to be ***exceptional circumstances***. It is for the Head Teacher to determine the number of days a child can be away from school *if* the leave is granted. If you consider that your request falls into this category you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notification. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with guidance from the DfE and the County Council.

**This means that, in the case of an unauthorised absence, the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified and a Penalty Notice may be issued. Please note that Penalty Notices are issued to *each* parent for *each* child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result in further legal intervention.**

**All absence requests must be completed on the attached form, letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school a minimum of 14 days *before* the start of the absence.**

Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider some absences to be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive. Children returning from an absence are unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class. This is something we *all* have a responsibility to avoid.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Jonathan Elms  
Headteacher

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

If, after reading the letter on the reverse, you consider you have exceptional circumstances to request a leave of absence during term time, please complete this form and return to the school at least 14 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Pupil Name ..... Class .....

First day of absence ..... Date of return to school .....

Total number of days missed .....

Exceptional circumstances are as follows:-

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

***I understand that if the request is unauthorised the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified of the absence taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that if I do not pay this will result in legal action.***

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Dated .....

(Please ensure you are giving at least 14 day's notice of the proposed absence)

✂-----

Pupil Name ..... Class .....

**AUTHORISED:** Your request has been authorised for the following dates:

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

**UNAUTHORISED:** Your request has been unauthorised for the following dates:

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

**This means that it is not considered that the circumstances you describe are exceptional. If you proceed to take the absence a Penalty Notice/s may be issued.**

Signed ..... Head Teacher Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

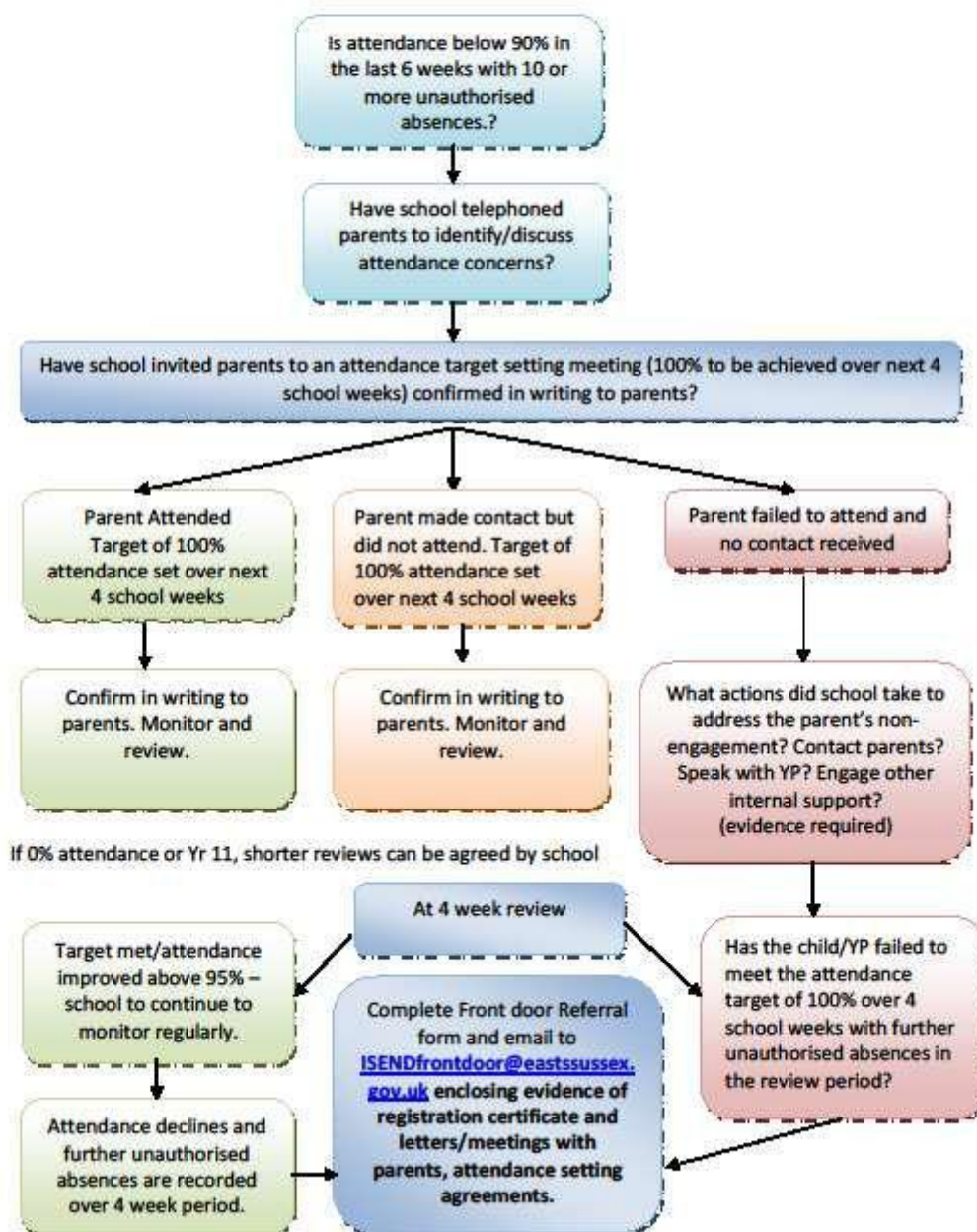


# Attendance Policy Appendix 2; 'ESBAS Flow Chart'.

## THRESHOLD FOR CORE/TRADED ATTENDANCE CASES

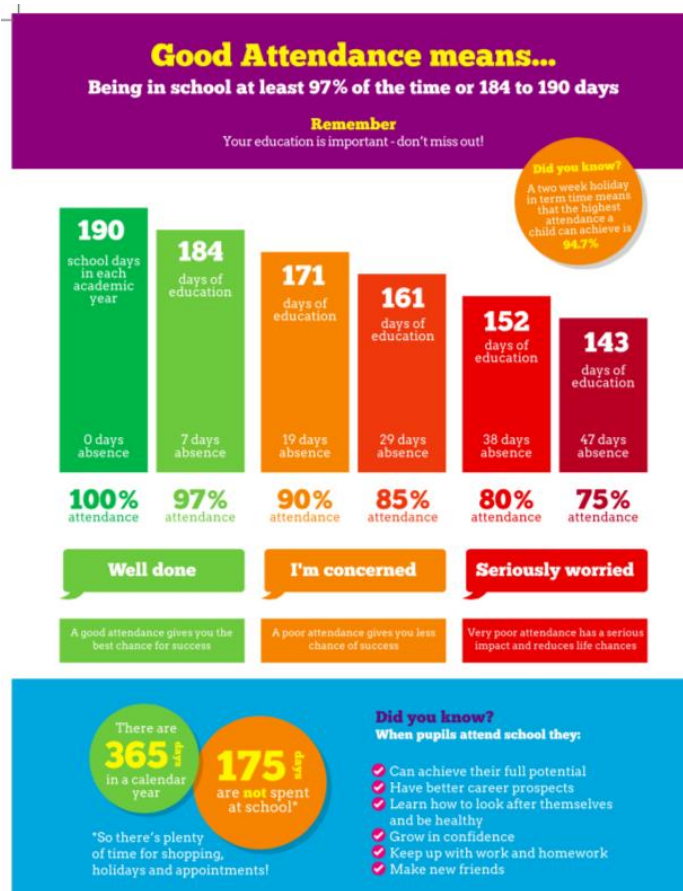
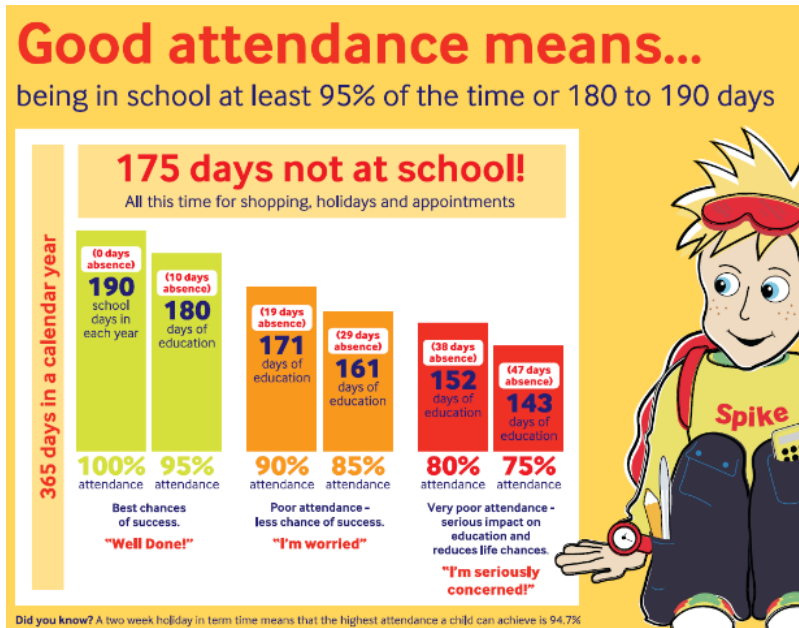
School are able to use units to purchase early intervention on attendance without having to have previously addressed attendance concerns with parents. Absences can be authorised/unauthorised for Traded cases. Traded referrals need to be sent to [ESBAS@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ESBAS@eastsussex.gov.uk) email address and core referrals sent to ISEND Front Door as shown in the flow chart below.

ESBAS will undertake the intervention at a unit cost agreed with the Area Team Leader. Where a Family Keyworker (FKW) is involved it is an expectation that if strategies used by the FKW have not improved attendance, that this is then raised with school to consider a referral to ESBAS. **NB Where a FKW is involved, School and ESBAS must ensure that the FKW is invited to any meetings and receive copies of any correspondence/updated information.**



# Attendance Policy Appendix 3; Reminders to be shared in Newsletters.

## Days off



# Lateness

