



Federation of Stoke Hill Schools

Attendance Policy

Date: May 2025

Review Date: May 2026

Public Sector Equality Duty

This policy is written with due regard for the public sector equality duty that is placed on all schools. The Stoke Hill Federation School will make reasonable adjustments for members of the school community with SEND and protected characteristics and guard against discriminatory practices and victimisation to ensure no-one is treated unfairly.

Stoke Hill Federation Attendance Policy

Our Federation is committed to providing a full, happy and successful educational experience for all of our children. We believe that if children are to fully benefit from our teaching, play based interactions and enrichment activities, good attendance is crucial.

At Stoke Hill we recognise that attendance is not the sole responsibility of the child, although we are committed to establishing high expectations and strong routines to support all Stoke Hill children as they grow and become more self-sufficient.

The Stoke Hill approach is one that is committed to working with families to improve attendance and supporting children to overcome any barriers they may have around regular and punctual school attendance.

The Policy clearly outlines the legal and statutory information we are required to share with all parents and carers. These details are often fixed in law and therefore we must ensure our systems are compliant with the Local Authority and Department for Education requirements. However, our approach to attendance is one of partnership and we urge all families to work with us to improve attendance for your child.

Why regular attendance is so important:



Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.



Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if he / she does not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities of your child encompasses the promotion of good, regular attendance.



The Law Relating to Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'



The law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which we cannot consider reasonable or could have been avoided during term time. Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- weddings / family celebrations during term time
- absences which have never been properly explained
- parental work commitments
- parental medical issues
- a sibling being at home ill
- birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time
- late to school once register has been closed

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any issues with regular absence are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up the absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately and an awareness letter will be sent home.

'Lates'

One of the largest contributions to persistent absence is being late to school. If your child arrives after the close of registration they are automatically marked 'late' and

therefore they also receive a mark of **unauthorised absence**.

Punctuality Procedures

Junior School:

- Doors open at 8.30am
- All pupils must be at their classrooms by **8.40am**.
- Any time after 8.40am will be recorded as a "late" mark.

Infant School:

- Doors open at 8.40am
- All pupils must be at their classrooms by **8.50am**.
- Any time after 8.50am will be recorded as a "late" mark.

If the school is concerned about a pattern of 'lates' you will receive a 'Lates' letter.

To ensure all pupils have good attendance everyone has a role to play:

Pupils

- When able to, take responsibility to be organised, go to bed at an appropriate time, pack school bags the night before, be helpful to your parents and carers and give yourself plenty of time for the journey to school.
- If you walk to school on your own, make sure you get to school on time and stick to the agreed routines you have made with your parents or carer.
- Let your teacher or trusted adult know if there is anything you are concerned or worried about.

Parent/carers

- In the event of absence, contact the school as soon as possible preferably before 8.30am via the School Gateway message app or telephone the school office and leave a message. Please state clearly your child's name, class, the reason for the absence and if possible the expected return date. Please message or ring before 9am each day your child is absent.
- If your child has an urgent medical/dental appointment during the school day please telephone the school at least 24 hours in advance. The child will be collected from reception and returned to school after the appointment unless for medical reasons they cannot return.
- If there is a change of plan and you cannot collect your child as normal at the end of the day, you may send a trusted adult to collect them instead. For safeguarding reasons you must let the school office know in advance who the adult is, we will need their name and if unknown to school please agree a code word we can use to establish their permission to collect.

Admin team

- Will note all parental absence messages by **9am** each day and then text/phone parents/carers of any absent pupils from whom we have not had a message – before **10.30am** where possible.
- The Admin team may follow up on messages that do not contain enough information for reason absence.
- Analyse pupil data to identify individuals, groups of learners and patterns of poor attendance and share with the Attendance team, (Executive Headteacher, Heads of School, SENCo, Family Support Worker and Assistant SENCo). This information will also be presented to the Attendance Improvement Officer for Devon.
- Accurately code attendance and prepare any follow up letters / communications for the Attendance Team.
- Prepare the appropriate paperwork required in applying for a prosecution.

The Attendance Team

- Will meet each half term to discuss individual cases.
- Identify pupils who have attendance concerns and follow the graduated system of school response including parental phone calls, letters, development of a support/reintegration plan, referral to Devon's Attendance Improvement Officer.
- Develop strategies across the Federation in order to offer targeted support to families struggling with attendance.
- Communicate with teachers to ensure they know what actions are being taken and their role in any next steps.
- Work proactively to ensure prosecution is an absolute last resort. This work may include the attendance improvement officer and focus on families with attendance below 92%.




Classroom teachers

- Ensure registers are taken immediately and accurately morning and afternoon.
- Build meaningful relationships with all families to ensure attendance patterns can be identified early and proactively resolved.
- Inform Family Support worker asap if they have concerns about the attendance of a child.
- Follow the Federation's safeguarding systems in all matters. As a Federation we recognise that changes in attendance could indicate a safeguarding issue at school or away from school

If attendance is 80%, this means your child will have missed:

1. 1 day EVERY week
2. 6 days EVERY half term
3. 12 days EVERY term
4. 36 days EVERY year
5. 180 days in five years...

...that is nearly ONE WHOLE SCHOOL YEAR!

	100% Attendance	0 days of learning missed	Best chance of success
	95% Attendance	2 weeks of learning missed	Poor attendance: will impact on learning, friendship / social dynamics and confidence in class
	90% Attendance	4 weeks of learning missed	
	85% Attendance	5½ weeks of learning missed	Very poor attendance. Negative impact on learning. Families are likely to be prosecuted

Monitoring of Absence and Escalation Procedure:

Your child has a pattern of lateness.	The class teacher will discuss the issue with you. If the pattern continues, a 'Lates' letter will be sent home.
Child has 5 days absent, either authorised or unauthorised	A letter is sent to parents alerting them to the level of absence. Attendance Awareness Letter.
Child has further absences either authorised or unauthorised.	A second letter is sent to parents alerting them of the growing level of absence. A phone call from the Attendance team will be made and a meeting will be offered. Attendance Warning letter will be issued.
Any further absence	'Attendance Concern' letter from Executive Head and the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer will be notified of attendance concerns.
Absence continues	Meeting arranged with the Attendance Improvement Officer and legal representatives if necessary.
Absence continues to escalate with no input from parents or carers.	Legal meeting will be held. Possible prosecution.

Absence during term time

- Parents are required to complete the school's absence request form **S2** (available from the office or online), to request any absence for their child.
- This must be applied for in advance and if it is not authorised and you still take your child out of school, you may be liable for a penalty notice. Penalty notices are issued for each child and are payable by each parent or carer. If penalty notices are not paid, the cost escalates and may result in court action being taken.
- Parents will receive a copy of the S2 form once it has been actioned by the _____ Head of _____ School.



Stoke Hill Federation

Address

Date

Late letter

Dear Parents of *****

Sometimes there is absolutely nothing you can do to prevent being late to school, as a large and busy school community we know that. However, this letter is being sent home because we have noticed a pattern of lateness and your child is suffering from this.

Being late to registration means they do not start their school day alongside their peers and are often on 'catch up' from the start. This can be embarrassing, it might mean they don't know what they are doing and they are simply starting their day off on the wrong footing.

We will work very hard to compensate for the issues brought about by late attendance but no matter how hard we work, this pattern of lateness is placing your child at a disadvantage. Please work with us to break this pattern so we can avoid referring your case to the Education Welfare Officer which could result in legal action.

If you are experiencing problems which are related to school refusal, please make the school aware so that we may offer support through Early Help for additional support.

Yours sincerely,

Jamie Sullivan
Head of School



Stoke Hill Federation

Address

Date

Attendance Warning Letter

Dear Parents of *****

Please find enclosed a copy of ***** current attendance record for your information.

We are concerned about your child's poor attendance which is having a significant effect upon his / her education. ***** already has ** absences this term. We appreciate illness can have an impact on attendance but you are receiving this warning letter to highlight the significant gap in your child's attendance compared to the national average of 94%.

It is most important that ***** attends school every day. If there is anything we can do to support your child attending school, please do not hesitate to contact us so that we can make a plan to support you through Early Help.

Yours Sincerely

Jamie Sullivan
Head of School



Stoke Hill Federation

Address

Date

Dear Parents of *****

Attendance Concern

This letter is to inform you that school is now extremely concerned regarding the number of absences your child has had from school. As a school, we aim to have all our students attending 100% of the time.

Currently ***** attendance is recorded as ** % with ** sessions of absence. This attendance percentage will be having an effect on your child's overall education.

Therefore as of today, absences will only be authorised by the school, if we are sufficiently satisfied that the reasons for the absence were completely unavoidable. You are invited to provide the school with additional information or documentation to enable us to make an informed decision regarding authorisation for each absence.

If you believe that your child has an ongoing medical condition, which keeps affecting their ability to attend school fully, then we would ask that you talk to us about this and we will consider developing an Individual Health Care Plan with you and any appropriate health care professionals, to support your child with their education.

If you, the parent, consider that there are other issues, which affect your child's ability to attend school regularly, then it may be possible for the school to access some additional support under Early Help. If you would like us to explore this with you then please get in touch.

Please contact me on the above contact details if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Hammerton-Jackson
Executive Headteacher
Stoke Hill Federation