



Attendance Policy



The Stour Federation

1. INTRODUCTION

“Attendance is everyone’s business, and everyone involved with the care of children is equally responsible for ensuring children’s attendance. This means schools, LAs, social care, NHS workers and community partners all have a responsibility to see the child in school every day, and to wrap support around that child. All partners should make children’s attendance a top priority. Every child should be in school every day, supported and ready to learn. Every child has the right to a fantastic education.”

Dame Rachel de Souza, Children’s Commissioner for England

In The Stour Federation, we aim for school environments which enable and encourage all members of the community to strive for excellence. For a child to reach their full potential and experience every opportunity the school has to offer, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, and their parents or carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

2. AIMS

The Trust is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, punctual, daily attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage.

The Trust actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupils’ attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times by listening to parents and children and collaborating proactively to remove attendance barriers.

3. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [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](#).
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#).
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments).
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring their child regularly attends school is the parent's/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this to the child.
- Ensure their child arrives at school and is in class on time every day.
- Inform the school if their child is going to be late e.g. if a car breaks down or if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Inform the school by telephone as soon as possible the reason for their child's absence on the first day and each subsequent day of absence.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so well in advance.
- Avoid making medical or dental appointments during school time as far as possible.
- Provide medical evidence:
 - If the sickness continues for over 3 days.
 - When the child has recurring sickness or a medical ailment which requires them to take sporadic periods of absence from school e.g. tonsillitis. We request this information if it reoccurs 3 or more times. Failure to provide evidence will result in a referral to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS).
 - When urgent medical appointments are made during term time.
- Provide more than one up-to-date contact number.
- To work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- To proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- To proactively engage with formal support when offered - including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day in the correct uniform, unless they are too ill to do so.

School Office Staff

School office staff are expected to:

- Take phone calls/emails from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record details on the Management Information System (MIS).
- Ensure registers have been completed correctly.
- Complete daily absence checks, including absence and lateness follow up.
- Reporting the absence of Looked After Children and those on a child protection plan to designated staff.

The Trust Board and Local Academy Councils

Directors will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust's ethos and policies, which are regularly reviewed for effectiveness
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help executive leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual cohorts or schools who need it most.
- Ensure effective practice is being shared between schools within the trust

Local Academy Councils will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance, promoting it as part of the school ethos and in line with related Trust policies.
- In partnership with executive leaders ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance and are sharing effective practice with other schools in the Trust.

The Headteacher/Head of School

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Leading and promoting attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors termly.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Meeting parents.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The designated person for attendance

The designated person for attendance is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level and share with SLT weekly.
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher.
- Working with Warwickshire Attendance Service to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations, systems and processes.
- Delivering or signposting targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis using the correct codes using the MIS or completing a paper register if there is a technical issue with electronic registration.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with all children.
- Communicate concerns with attendance and punctuality with the designated person for attendance or headteacher.

5. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Schools are legally required to keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. The register will be marked twice a day: at the start of the school day (morning session) and after lunchtime ends (afternoon session).

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. The school uses the [DfE attendance codes](#) to record attendance, this is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

6. LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital learning and important messages from their class teacher. Every minute a child is late to school can add up to a lot of learning time over the year.

On each school website, the following information will be published.

- The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils.
- From what time children can arrive (when the gates open).
- At what time the register for the morning session will be taken and be kept open until (30 minutes).
- At what time the register for the afternoon session will be taken.

At the official start time of the school day registers will be taken. Your child will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in by that time.

Children arriving after the official start time are required to come into school via the school office. They must be accompanied by a parent/carers and be signed into the late book. and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded.

When the register closes (30 minutes after the official start of the school day), in accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - 'U', but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness.

Where site-appropriate, a member of school staff will undertake an occasional 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the headteacher, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

7. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone the parent/carer on the first day of absence if the school has not heard from them – this is because we have a duty to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation if absences persist and this is deemed appropriate.
- Refer the matter to the Warwickshire Attendance Service if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

If the child is subject to a child protection plan the procedures set out for day two unexplained absence will be implemented immediately.

Second Day Absence

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers on the second day of absence, the school will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact. This will include making enquiries to known friends, wider family and undertaking home visits. Where the school is unable to undertake a home visit, they will contact the police to request they undertake a welfare check. This action will be taken on day one if the child has complex needs or is subject to a child protection plan.

Ten Days' Absence

Schools in The Stour Federation have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. This is known as a Child Missing in Education.

Persistent Absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents/carers to resolve this. Projected PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Warwickshire Attendance Service and some cases may lead to legal action being initiated.

Some children may have acute health conditions which, despite the best efforts of parents and carers, lead to significant ongoing periods of absence. Schools will work closely with parents/carers to ensure support systems are developed to enable each child to attend school as often as physically possible. Children should never be excluded from school or activities on medical grounds unless they are acutely unwell or hospitalised.

If acutely unwell, children will access hospital schools supported by their home school as appropriate. Close links will be maintained with children and their families during any sustained periods of absence to ensure continuity of relationships and provision. Children in recovery can be

supported by a flexible return to schooling which is manageable for them.

Families of children with acute physical and medical conditions that lead to pervasive absence will not follow the same systems and procedures laid out in this policy.

Reporting to Parents

Annual reports to parents sent home in July will contain a child's percentage attendance and number of unauthorised absences.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving, other than at the end of Year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides the school with the following information:

- Child's name.
- Class.
- Current address.
- Date of leaving.
- New home address.
- Name of new school
- Address of new school.

This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

8. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason, such as:

- Illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised).
- Medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek

- advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Parents and carers are sometimes unsure whether or not to send their child into school if they do not seem to be feeling entirely well. Generally, if parents are unsure, then we would advise bringing your child into school and letting us know to keep a special eye on them. Staff are very good at spotting when a child does not seem right and parents will be contacted to be asked for them to be collected. Please use the guide below or [access official guidance online](#).



UK Health
Security
Agency



Should I keep my child off school?

Yes

	Until...
Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and Flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19.
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping Cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics

No

but make sure you let their school or nursery know about...

Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek




SCAN ME

Advice and guidance
To find out more, search for health protection in schools or scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/minftec>.

© Crown copyright 2022. Product code: MSC21BN. 3K APRIL 2022 (APS Gateway number: 2021145)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however, this list is not exhaustive:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session.
- Shopping trips.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Availability of cheaper holidays and/or desired accommodation.
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term.
- Booked the wrong holiday dates by mistake.
- Holiday booked by another family member.
- Attending a wedding that is not for an immediate family member or not part of the ceremony.
- Unable to take a holiday in school holidays due to work commitments.
- Adult appointments affecting bringing a child to school or collecting on time.
- Different term dates for children at schools in another local authority.
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher - may result in the school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a penalty notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority.
- Day trips.
- During KS1 and KS2 SATS assessments.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

The regulations regarding Leave of Absence (The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.) advise:

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Expectations

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence in advance parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the

absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

- Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as ‘unauthorised’. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 each child if paid within 21 days).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

9. PENALTY NOTICES

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

The local authority will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and improvements are not being made. Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Local Authority, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where a suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to

prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken.

10. UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved collaboratively between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as Connect 4 Health (school nursing service), Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Family Support Worker or Warwickshire Attendance Service. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we school work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

In The Stour Federation, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

All schools in The Stour Federation will:

- Ensure that all new parents are introduced to this policy and information on attendance will be in the school welcome pack/induction.
- Use the school newsletter to regularly update the school community about attendance and promote good attendance.
- Approach individual parents where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for learning.
- Maintain and update records within the MIS.
- Use interventions, such as the Individual Attendance Plan to develop strategies and targets for families to improve attendance.

In The Stour Federation we have high expectations of attendance for all pupils. However, we recognise that for some children in certain circumstances, attendance at school may be beyond their control. Therefore, while individual schools may have their own recognition of good attendance, we do not award individual 100% attendance based on the ethical implications of such a policy, but instead focus on the individual and their attendance at school. This is because:

- Children cannot help having medical conditions, or becoming unwell.
- Poor health is not the sign of a lack of commitment to a setting; it is a fact of life for some families. Where families are already going through the difficulties inherent in supporting a sick child, the message that they are not trying hard enough could lead to additional stress

12. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

Monitoring Attendance

Schools in The Stour Federation will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Academy Council.

Analysing Data

Schools in The Stour Federation will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

Schools in The Stour Federation will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and executive leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Schools in The Stour Federation will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

Home Education

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from school in favour of home education. Parents

must inform the school of their decision to home educate in writing. Once the school receives this notification, they will then inform the local authority and take the child off of their roll, following a two-week 'cooling off' period. It is important that the decision to home educate is discussed and considered carefully. Parents should talk to the school about any difficulties their child may be having; once a child has been taken off roll their place will be allocated and may not be available if parents change their mind at a later date.

Part-Time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regular reviews with the child and their parents.

14. MONITORING INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of the Local Academy Council to monitor overall attendance of their school. They request a termly report from the Headteacher/Head of School. The Local Academy Council also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Local Academy Council will, therefore, examine closely information provided for them and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.

Each school keeps accurate attendance records through a computerised registration as part of their MIS.

The rates of attendance are reported to the Trust Board in the CEO's termly report.