



Pupil Attendance and Management Policy (Stockton)

Our Mission

“Together we work as one family to ensure excellence for all.”

Our Vision

To be an ambitious, inclusive, collaborative family of schools, ensuring fullness of life and excellence in education, whilst celebrating individuality.

Policy Reviewed and Adopted by Board of Directors:	Autumn Term 2024
Date of Next Review:	Autumn Term 2028
Responsible Officer:	Lindsey Vollans

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Advisory Board

The Local Advisory Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The School's Senior Attendance Champion is the Headteacher

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Debbie Hamilton and can be contacted via pentland@oneexcellence.co.uk or 01642 559609.

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the school's senior attendance champion and the headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Sophie Gallagher and can be contacted via 01642 559609.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Call parents of absent children if they haven't contacted the school office by 9.00am
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher or attendance officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Note on Arbor when a child arrives to school late or leaves school early

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Provide proof of any medical appointments

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

The school day is from 8:50am and ends at 15:25pm. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken after the lunch break at 13:00pm and will be kept open for 10 minutes.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents are required to bring in appointment cards as evidence of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Holidays during Term Time

A holiday is generally not considered an exceptional circumstance. You cannot usually take your child away during term time. You can be fined or face legal action for taking your child on holiday during term time. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office.

If a child is on a holiday for 15 days or more, a forwarding address must be provided by parents/carers so that communication between the school and family can remain in place.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

On Arbor, we record how many minutes late each child is. This is monitored during our regular attendance meetings. Our gates are open from 8.45am to allow time for children to arrive before the start of the day.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may ask the school attendance officer and/or PSA to carry out a 'door knock'. If they are unable to, SLT will carry one out. If there are concerns around the children's safety, police will be contacted.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels half-termly via letters and/or written reports.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Letters will be sent out each half term.

Attendance information will be shared on Class Dojo and on the school newsletter.

Face to face meetings with parents of children whose attendance is below 90%.

Meetings over the phone will take place with parents of children whose attendance is below 96%.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, PSA, and other school 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.

The school 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
- Send half termly letters regarding attendance.

Attendance Intervention

Stockton-on-Tees Council Locality Team fulfils the statutory duty and responsibilities of the local authority in relation to school attendance. The locality team promote and enforce regular attendance at school for all children of statutory school age in Stockton-on-Tees and work in partnership across agencies.

Stockton Borough Council absence procedures ensure schools and the local authority provide support and challenge to parents / carers and pupils to afford children of Stockton to take advantage of the best possible educational opportunities available to them.

If a parent / carer of a child registered at a Stockton school fails to meet their parental responsibility in ensuring their child's regular school attendance, then legal action may be taken. Stockton Borough Council's absence procedures outline the actions at tier 1 and tier 2 that schools in partnership with other agencies should take prior to a tier 3 referral to the locality team for legal intervention to support and enforce the child's attendance at school.

TIER 1 – School Level Intervention

School must follow their own internal school attendance procedures. This will include:

- first day response,
- regular home visits,
- regular (and more than 1) meetings to discuss concerns and identify support measures with a formalised attendance improvement plan with SMART targets that include parent and pupil views,
- details of the reasonable adjustments, academic and pastoral, to support the pupil should be included in the plan, along with support relating to any SEND need, consider the use of direction off site to an alternative provision for some pupils who are difficult to re-engage with school,
- escalation to the school senior leader responsible for attendance (SLT).

TIER 2 – Support from other agencies

School should work with other agencies to ensure a full package of support is provided to the pupil; this will include:

- advice and guidance from the School Support team support from Family Support teams for children who have an active early help assessment and a family worker.
- details of the reasonable adjustments academic and pastoral to support the pupil,
- request for outreach support for SEND needs e.g. SEMH One Point Panel, specialist support from other agencies e.g. mental health, 0-19 nursing service,
- EHCP interim reviews where necessary,
- support from Social Care teams for children who are CIN / CP / CYPIOC,
- safeguarding agency referrals e.g. CHUB, if children are in need of intervention due to neglect, abuse, radicalisation, or any form of exploitation.

Attendance improvement plans used at tier 1 and tier 2 should have a written record with minutes produced detailing the discussion, the key issues / barriers to attendance, actions that each member will take to resolve the issues and an attendance target set. The attendance improvement plan should run for no less than 6 school weeks. Parent / carer should receive a copy of the minutes from this meeting. A review date should be set and agreed with parents. During the attendance improvement support plan meeting, school staff should detail how contact with the parent and pupil will take place and who will make the contact. This may be a weekly support meeting, a home visit or where this is not feasible due to the parents' work commitments, a telephone contact as a minimum.

It is advisable that from the attendance improvement plan meeting, further absences are unauthorised unless evidence is provided to school to inform that the absence is for a serious and unavoidable reason. If the absence is for reasons of illness, acceptable medical evidence that should be considered may take the form of a prescription slip, sight of medication prescribed by the GP, note/letter from the GP, medical or dental appointment letter, or evidence that the pupil was sent home from school too ill to remain in school. In these instances, the absence for the day the child was sent home should be authorised and a common-sense approach taken for any further related subsequent absence.

Parent / carer should be made aware that continuing unauthorised absence may result in escalation to tier 3 and a referral to the local authority for legal intervention.

On review, the school should decide either to extend the attendance improvement support plan, make a referral to the local authority for legal proceedings to commence, or end the attendance improvement support plan if absence is no longer an issue.

Where a pupil's absence continues following the interventions detailed in tier 1 and 2 and the threshold for a referral to the locality team is met then escalation to tier 3 should follow.

The Local Authority threshold for referral is ten unauthorised absence sessions in the previous ten school week period.

TIER 3 - Referral to the Locality Team

A referral to the Locality Team will be accepted when:

- school have completed Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions
- unauthorised absences continue
- the documentation to evidence completion of Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions by school is provided with the referral form, this will be quality assured by a member of the locality team.
- the referral threshold is met 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in the previous 10 school weeks.

It is good practice to inform the parent / carer that a referral has been made to the local authority Locality Team for legal intervention.

All referrals should be accompanied by the following supporting evidence:

- copies of letters to parent / carer,
- details of home visits – dates, outcomes,
- copy of school's attendance improvement support plan including minutes from review meetings,
- copy of the Help and Support Assessment and details of review (provide reason if this is not in place), • up to date attendance printout,
- details of other agency involvement, fully completed referral form,
- details of person/s with parental responsibility,
- signed and dated by the headteacher.

On receipt of all the relevant paperwork, a fully completed referral form and an attendance printout displaying recent unauthorised absence over the previous 10 week period, the locality team will action the referral.

The Local Authority Locality Team will decide to either:

- (A) Follow Stockton local authority penalty notice procedure, or
- (B) Arrange an Attendance Case Conference.

Penalty Notice Procedure

- A penalty notice “Notice to Improve” will be issued by the local authority to the parent(s)/carers named on the referral form outlining their parental responsibility. The Notice to Improve advises the parent / carer the child should return to school immediately with regular daily attendance.
- The “Notice to Improve” will cover a 6-week monitoring period and no further unauthorised absence is expected during this time. Evidence to cover absences must be provided by the parent / carer.
- At the end of the 6-week monitoring period, the locality team caseworker will review the pupil’s school attendance. If the target has been met (no unauthorised absences in the 6-week monitoring period) the case will be closed and passed back to school level monitoring.
- If unauthorised absences continue, a penalty notice will be issued to the parent / carer named on the referral form submitted by the school.
- In cases of non-payment, the local authority will consider prosecuting the parent / carer in the magistrate court.
- Parent / carer may not be issued with more than 2 penalty notices in a rolling 3-year period from the issue of the date of the first penalty notice. A further instance will be escalated directly to prosecution in the magistrate court.

Attendance Case Conference

- If a parent / carer has been prosecuted previously for failing to ensure their child’s attendance, an Attendance Case Conference will be convened.
- A notice to improve will be issued to the parent / carer detailing their parental responsibility and outlining the local authority’s consideration of prosecution in the magistrate court if unauthorised absences continue.
- The local authority officer will contact school staff to arrange an Attendance Case Conference. Once the Attendance Case Conference has been arranged, a letter will be sent to the parent / carer inviting them to attend to the meeting. If other professionals are involved with the family, they will also be invited to the meeting.
- A parenting contract and a 6-week attendance plan will be negotiated and put in place at the meeting. The parent / carer will be cautioned according to PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, PACE).
- The officer will visit the parent / carer within one week of the meeting to deliver the minutes and parenting contract. The parent / carer will be invited to sign the parenting contract. All parties will be asked to sign the contract: school representative, parent, pupil, and local authority officer.
- Further home visits will be made at least fortnightly during the period of the plan to offer advice and support to the parent and pupil.
- On review, if the attendance target set at the attendance case conference is achieved, a further 4-week monitoring period will take place. The caseworker will maintain contact with the parent / carer and pupil during this period. If targets continue to be met, the case will be closed and passed back to school level monitoring.
- If new information becomes available to the caseworker during the intervention that suggests the family circumstances have changed, or a significant need emerges relating to the family, then it may be appropriate to return to attendance case conference to ensure the plan is fit for purpose.
- If the targets set at the attendance case conference meeting are not achieved, then the local authority will consider prosecuting the parent / carer in the magistrate court.

Stage 3 Legal Process

- The case file of intervention will be reviewed, and authorisation sought from the Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Team Manager.
- Papers and witness statements will be prepared and sent to Stockton Borough Council’s Law and Democracy Department to obtain a summons from the Magistrate Court.

- An attendance certificate detailing the period of prosecution signed by the head teacher is required and will be requested by the officer to accompany the paperwork sent to the solicitor prosecuting on behalf of the local authority from the Law and Democracy Department.

Following Prosecution

- If the pupil's school attendance has improved, the case will be passed back to school for school level monitoring and should unauthorised absences reoccur, then the school should commence their school attendance procedures.
- If unauthorised absence continues, the caseworker in consultation with the Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Team Manager will take into consideration any new information. The case will be assessed to consider the range of parental responsibility measures to ensure the most appropriate response.

Schools should follow their Safeguarding Procedures for first day response throughout this process.

**LOCALITY TEAM
REFERRAL FORM**

PERSONAL/SCHOOL DETAILS			
Name of Pupil:		School:	Year:
Date of Birth:	Ethnicity/Language:	Number of unauthorised sessions in previous 10 school weeks Overall Attendance at Referral %:	
Gender: Male/Female		SEN Support <input type="checkbox"/>	Pupil Premium <input type="checkbox"/> EHCP <input type="checkbox"/>
Address:		FSM <input type="checkbox"/>	CIN <input type="checkbox"/> EHA <input type="checkbox"/>
Post Code:		CYPIOC <input type="checkbox"/>	CP <input type="checkbox"/>
Siblings: name/dob/ school			
PARENT/CARER DETAILS			
Name:	Relationship:	Name:	Relationship:
Parental Responsibility: Y/N Parent aware of referral: Y/N		Parental Responsibility: Y/N Parent aware of referral: Y/N	
Address:		Address:	
Post Code:	Tel:	Post Code:	Tel:
SCHOOL ACTION PRIOR TO REFERRAL (Please note – referral will not be accepted without evidence of School A			
<input type="checkbox"/> Letters sent to parent/carers	Date:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting in school/Minutes	Date:	Parent attended Y/N	
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance Plan	Date:	Reviewed Y/N Date:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Home Visit/s	Date/s:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of Help and Support Service	Date:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion with pupil Y/N	Date:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to other agencies Y/N	Details/Date:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of reasonable adjustments Y/N	Details:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Y/N	Details/Date:		
(Please attach copies of Attendance Certificate/Minutes of Meetings/Letters/EHAs etc.)			

COMMENTS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

REASON FOR REFERRAL

OTHER AGENCIES/PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED

	AGENCY	WORKER	TEL NO.		AGENCY	WORKER	TEL NO.
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Support Teams			<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMHS		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Support			<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth Justice Team		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Group Conferencing			<input type="checkbox"/>	SEND		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Care			<input type="checkbox"/>	EIA/SEMH Team		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth Support Team			<input type="checkbox"/>	Police/Antisocial		
<input type="checkbox"/>	EPS			<input type="checkbox"/>	Alliance		
<input type="checkbox"/>	0-19 Health			<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing		
<input type="checkbox"/>	GP			<input type="checkbox"/>	Eastern Ravens		

PARENT/CARER

Has parent engaged? Y/N	Details:
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Are you aware of any concerns with regard to carrying out home visits? Y/N	Details:
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Name of Referrer/School Contact:

I confirm this is an accurate record of’s attendance

I agree the Local Authority will give consideration to the issue of a penalty notice” Notice to Improve” letter : **Y/N**

Signature of Head Teacher/Principal: Date:

Please note: If this referral form is incomplete or relevant information is not attached, it will be returned to school

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO:
attendance.vlt@stockton.gov.uk