



Stillness Junior School

Attendance Policy

Last Reviewed: January 2017
Review Date: January 2019

Introduction:

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

Statement of Intent

Stillness Junior School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Stillness Junior School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe.

If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the school then, as part of our safeguarding policy:

- The school office will call the parent/carer to make contact.
- If there is no response to the call the office will try to make contact with the other emergency contacts. The purpose of this is to check on the safety of the child.
- The school office holds a list of children whose attendance is a matter of concern.

The gates open at 8.40am, school starts at 8.50am. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office, where the reason for lateness is recorded. Children arriving after 9.30 am are marked in the register with an 'unauthorised late mark'.

Parents or carers are asked to contact the school if they are experiencing difficulties getting their child to school.

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'.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents are expected to contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence, informing the school of the reason for absence. (See section above)

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours.

- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments.
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- d) If a child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- e) For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- f) Where there are concerns about a child's attendance the school will ask to see a medical certificate for absences of 5 days or more.

The Role of the School Staff

The head teacher has overall responsibility for attendance and has to report termly percentages to the local authority. The attendance officer collects and monitors data, reporting to the Inclusion Manager weekly.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present or mark as an 'N' if a child is absent. The attendance officer will mark in late or absent children in the morning and telephone the parents of any absent children if they have not already made contact.

It is the responsibility of the office attendance officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)

Lateness

At Stillness Junior School the register is taken at 8.50am and 13.00pm (Yrs 3 and 4) or 13.30pm (Yrs 5-6). Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late when registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:20 am and 13.30pm or 2pm (Yrs 5 and 6). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the head teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The head teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the head teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the head teacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The head teacher is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays.

When an application is made for authorised absence, the head teacher will give due consideration to the circumstances and the child’s past attendance history.

Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

The school closely monitors attendance and lateness to try to minimize poor attendance and punctuality through

- Staff speaking to parents and carers as and when concerns arise
- The learning mentor making contact with families whose attendance is below expected to try to find ways to improve
- The attendance officer writing to parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve.

This year the thresholds for “persistent absence” have changed from 15% to 10% of sessions missed. We closely monitor attendance.

Your child’s attendance will be reported termly as part of their school report.

Child’s Attendance	Action
100%	Excellent
96% to 99%	Good – Well done – strive to build on this
94% to 95%	Satisfactory – Children’s attendance is satisfactory but they will be missing out on what other children are learning and doing. Parents need to work closely with the school to improve the situation.
93% or below	Less than Satisfactory – Any child whose attendance falls below 85% is regarded nationally as a child who has persistent absence. The government is very concerned with this and has invested heavily to monitor the attendance of these children. Schools have targets to reduce the levels of persistent absence and Educational Social Workers work closely with families to support them in getting their child to school each day. In some persistent cases a penalty notice or legal proceedings may be initiated.

Support from the School

The school understands that from time to time situations may arise which make it difficult for parents to ensure their child is in school. For example

- Housing issues
- Health issues
- Children's behavioural issues

Local Authority Action

When there are concerns about a child's attendance and it does not appear to be improving, the school will refer to the local authority attendance service who may consider the following:

Education Welfare Officer Actions

This may include:

Home visits, multi-agency meetings, sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services, Family Group Conference Service or Fast Track to Prosecution.

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child).

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed. The AWO advise that if a child has been absent from school for 2 weeks with no reason given, or if they have moved and no new school has contacted Stillness Junior School, that a referral is made to CME team.

Rewards

Children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of each term receive a letter of acknowledgement from the Chair of Governors.

Appendix added 25.05.16
Attendance Officer (AO) inputs data daily.

First day of absence	No reason given	AO to phone or text parent to find out why AO to mark child as N in register AO to record actions on WS
Second day of absence	Still no reason	AO to phone or text parent to find out why AO to mark child as N in register AO to record actions on WS
Third day of absence	Still no reason	AO to send out letter requesting parent contact as a matter of urgency. If not back by day 10 then we will have to report them as a child missing from education. AO to mark child as N in register AO to record actions on WS AO to record on pupil profile that a letter has been sent.
Tenth day of absence	Still no contact	Follow missing child procedures: AO to email AWO and the Attendance Team to inform them. AO to report to Child Missing from Education team. AO to record actions on WS AO to record on pupil profile that a letter has been sent.

Monitoring

Every 2 weeks the School attendance team meet.

AO prints out list of those whose attendance falls below 90%.

AO to also bring previous list with notes of actions and progress.

1 st meeting	Child's attendance falls below 90%* Team discuss any mitigating circumstances. If no special circumstances then:	AO to send home letter 1 AO to send email to AWO and School Attendance Team. AO to record actions on WS and child's profile
2 nd meeting 2 weeks later	Team discuss progress. If Child's attendance has not improved then	AO to send home letter 2 AO to send email to AWO and School Attendance Team. AO to record actions on WS and child's profile
3 rd meeting 2 weeks later	Team discuss progress. If Child's attendance has not improved then	AO to send home letter 3 to book a meeting Attendance team to decide on date and time of meeting AO to send email to AWO and School Attendance Team. AO to record actions on WS and

		child's profile
Meeting with parent	At meeting make it clear that a warning can be issued for a penalty notice.	Notes from meeting to go on to child's profile or into their file. AO to record that the meeting happened on WS and child's profile.
2 weeks later	If no improvement	AO to let Lewisham know that a warning letter needs to be sent. AO to send email to AWO and School Attendance Team. AO to record actions on WS and child's profile

*We have agreed 90% initially June 16, but may raise the bar later.

Holidays

Parent requests a holiday on form. This will not normally be authorised.

- AO to send notification to parent.
- AO to send letter warning that if they take the holiday this could mean a penalty.
- AO to record actions on profile and WS
- AO to place copies of documentation in child's file.

Punctuality

AO to identify 5 or 6 main pupils causing concern for each 2 weekly School Attendance Team meeting, and report back on previously identified children.

Attendance team/panel: Jenny F., HT, IM, AO

School Attendance team: HT, IM, AO