



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Signed:	Anne Sargent (Head Teacher)	
	Steve Wells (Chair of Governors)	
Last Review	July 2019	
Next Review	July 2021	

## 1. Rationale

Regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievement and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' well-being and safety.

## 2. Guiding Principles

We are committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the opportunities available at Little Stoke Primary School. Our expectation is that students arrive on time and attend regularly; we will actively promote this ethos throughout the school community and encourage our students to achieve this. Where this expectation is not met we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this. **At Little Stoke Primary School excellent regular attendance is considered to be 98% or higher.**

**We will set an attendance target for the school community each academic year (currently 96%) as we work with families to reduce absence and raise attendance.**

## 3. Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that **parents/carers** have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability. Where this is not the case school will provide ongoing support as needed or may, in some cases, request Penalty Notices or legal proceeding in conjunction with the Local Authority.

The school have a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. We also have safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our students.

Pupil responsibilities – we encourage our pupils to become independent young people as they grow older and encourage them to improve their attendance and punctuality.

## 4. Attendance

- We will celebrate and reward students who achieve our expectations of a high level of attendance and those who have shown sustained improvement over time.
- We will share attendance levels with classes during assemblies and in class focusing on the link between attendance, achievement and enjoyment of learning.
- We will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies and class discussions, always reinforcing the link between attendance, achievement and enjoyment of learning.
- The school will communicate attendance matters to parents via text; telephone; email; letter and through the school website.
- We will talk to pupils about their attendance as they move through KS2 and discuss reasons for any late arrivals with both pupils and parents.

## 5. Absence from school

There are only two categories of absence from school:

### **Authorised – approved**

### **Unauthorised – not approved**

Only the Headteacher or Deputy Head (as delegate) can approve an absence from school. That is the law.

Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance.

### **Authorised (approved) absence – types of authorised absence that may be approved:-**

- Leave of absence – requests must be put in writing to the Head Teacher and will be considered on a case by case basis. The school does not provide forms for completion in these circumstances.
- Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital or Orthodontic appointments. (Non urgent, routine check-up appointments should be made for after 3.30pm or during the 12 weeks of school holidays over the year.) Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.
- Illness
- Religious observance – the Head Teacher must be informed of this in advance.
- If a student is excluded from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised (not approved) absence – types of absence that will not be approved**

- Absence due to birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members.
- Holiday in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed to by the Headteacher – in line with changes to the law implemented in 2013.
- Late arrival to school after the register has closed at 9.25 am has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

This is not an exhaustive list but just gives examples of unauthorised absences. Only the head teacher or deputy head teacher (as delegate) can authorise an absence from school. That is the law.

All absence – authorised and unauthorised (including lateness) – will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence (01454866522) and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

## 6. How our policy works in practice

### **Punctuality**

- Pupils who arrive late to registration after 8.55 are recorded as L (late before registration closes.) Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the Attendance team and letters sent to parents. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and pupils being asked to attend a meeting with the Education Welfare Consultancy.
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed at 9.25am, this is recorded as U (unauthorised late arrival.) More than ten unauthorised sessions over a 7 week period can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.
- We will at times operate a late arrivals/check at school with the Education Welfare Consultant. Parents will be challenged about the reason for the late arrival of their children, this is followed up with a daily telephone call to parents whenever possible.

### **Medical appointments**

- We monitor the amount of lessons missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents where a whole day is missed for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school. [Medical cards that can be signed at an appointment as evidence can be collected from the school office.](#)
- Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after 3.30pm and during the 12 week of school holiday during the year.

### **Illness**

- Pupils are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some pupils will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support pupils in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on their education.
- When a pupil is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, or a more serious longer term illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Deputy Head teacher and provide any support required.
- [When absence for pupils has been high due to illness we will also ask for evidence to show medical advice has been sought.](#)

### **Holiday absence in term time**

- If a parent feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time; they must put the request in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head teacher or Deputy Head Teacher will respond to these requests.
- Each case will be considered individually and the decision communicated to the parents. [Governors have adopted a zero tolerance to absence in term time for holidays and agreed that where parents ignore the policy, cases will be referred to the Local Authority for the issuing of a Penalty Notice. Any pupil who does not meet ' excellent regular attendance' expectations \(98%+\) and has more than 10 unauthorised absences in any 7 week period may be subject to a Penalty Notice.\(see Appendix 2.\)](#)

### **Children missing education**

- We have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is on the school roll, not in attendance and whose whereabouts we have not been able to establish. This particularly applies to students who move to another authority or country but are not yet in education but may also apply to pupils whose parents have not contacted us to explain why their child is not in school.

See Children Missing Education Policy

### Home education

- Parents have a right to educate their children other than at school. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from school to pursue this option, this decision must be put in writing to the Headteacher. The school will then complete a form with the students' details and send to the Local Authority.

## 7. Procedure

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a pupils' progress will be communicated to both pupils and parents through our attendance procedures. Please see Appendix I.

### Daily

- ✓ School Attendance Officer collates messages left by parents/carers regarding absence and enters correct code in register
- ✓ Teacher takes attendance register and enters present or absent code
- ✓ Class teacher takes register in mornings and afternoons.
- ✓ School Attendance Officer enters late arrival marks in register
- ✓ School Attendance Officer contacts parent/carer to follow up reasons for school not being informed of pupil absence.
- ✓ School Attendance Officer updates registers

### Weekly

- ✓ Attendance for all students is monitored by Deputy Head Teacher in consultation with the School Attendance Officer and SG Education Welfare Consultancy. [Particular focus is on those pupils below 95%, those pupils who have a high number of broken weeks and pupils who are identified as being part of a vulnerable group](#)
- ✓ Attendance issues shared with staff team where needed.

### Fortnightly

- ✓ Meetings between Deputy Head, School Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Consultants regarding interventions with students below 95%, with high number of broken weeks and particular groups of students where no improvement is shown. [School Attendance Meetings are set up with students, parents and the Attendance Manager](#)

### Termly

- ✓ Standard letters to parents of pupils with below 90%
- ✓ Standard letters to parents of pupils with high number of broken weeks
- ✓ Standard letters to parents of pupils with 10 or more late arrivals
- ✓ School attendance meetings with parents as agreed
- ✓ Report for Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team

School Attendance Meetings with parents follow a staged process with the aim being to investigate the reasons for low level of attendance and to look at what is needed to secure and sustain an improvement. Formal procedures are implemented when this intervention does not bring about change. [Please see Appendix I](#)

## 8. Personnel

### **Attendance Manager**

At Little Stoke Primary School, this will be the Deputy Head Teacher, supported by the Head Teacher.

#### **Key roles will include:**

- Meeting weekly with the School Attendance Officer to monitor attendance over the last week and respond to any concerns.
- Having informal conversations with parents when attendance is declining or where there is regular lateness
- Responding to any requests for absence in term time
- Preparing fortnightly attendance data in liaison with the Attendance Officer
- Meeting with the Education Welfare Consultants termly
- Reporting back to the Head Teacher on attendance concerns and data.

### **School Attendance Officer**

At Little Stoke Primary School this is the administrative Assistant.

#### **Key roles include:**

- collating messages left by parents/carers regarding absence and enters correct code in register
- Entering late arrival marks in register
- Contacting parent/carer to follow up reasons for school not being informed of pupil absence.
- Updating registers
- Summarising fortnightly attendance data for Celebration Assembly
- Reporting concerns to Deputy Head Teacher / Head Teacher

### **SG Education Welfare Consultancy**

#### **Key roles include:**

- Providing professional support and guidance, including necessary legal processes, in a package of support to ensure good attendance at our school
- Provision of casework, consultation and awareness sessions, so staff can identify, track and improve attendance to better-support pupils' learning outcomes
- Casework support is designed to ensure that no attendance issues drift but are appropriately addressed and handled in a timely fashion
- Keeping schools informed and staff trained on new and emerging initiatives to help promote and maintain good attendance
- The consultant will be attending school to monitor school attendance, hold attendance meetings with parent/carers for individual pupils with poor attendance, track and monitor attendance, and suggest ways to improve attendance. The consultant may also advise, make recommendations on the school attendance policy in line with government legislation.
- Further sessions may take place to promote awareness during new pupil intake times, school assemblies, as drop-in surgeries, at parent's evenings, on INSET days, and for new staff to ensure effective first day contact.
- Informing staff of new and emerging support – including attendance punctuality and initiatives, register sweeps, early bird, and late gate initiatives.

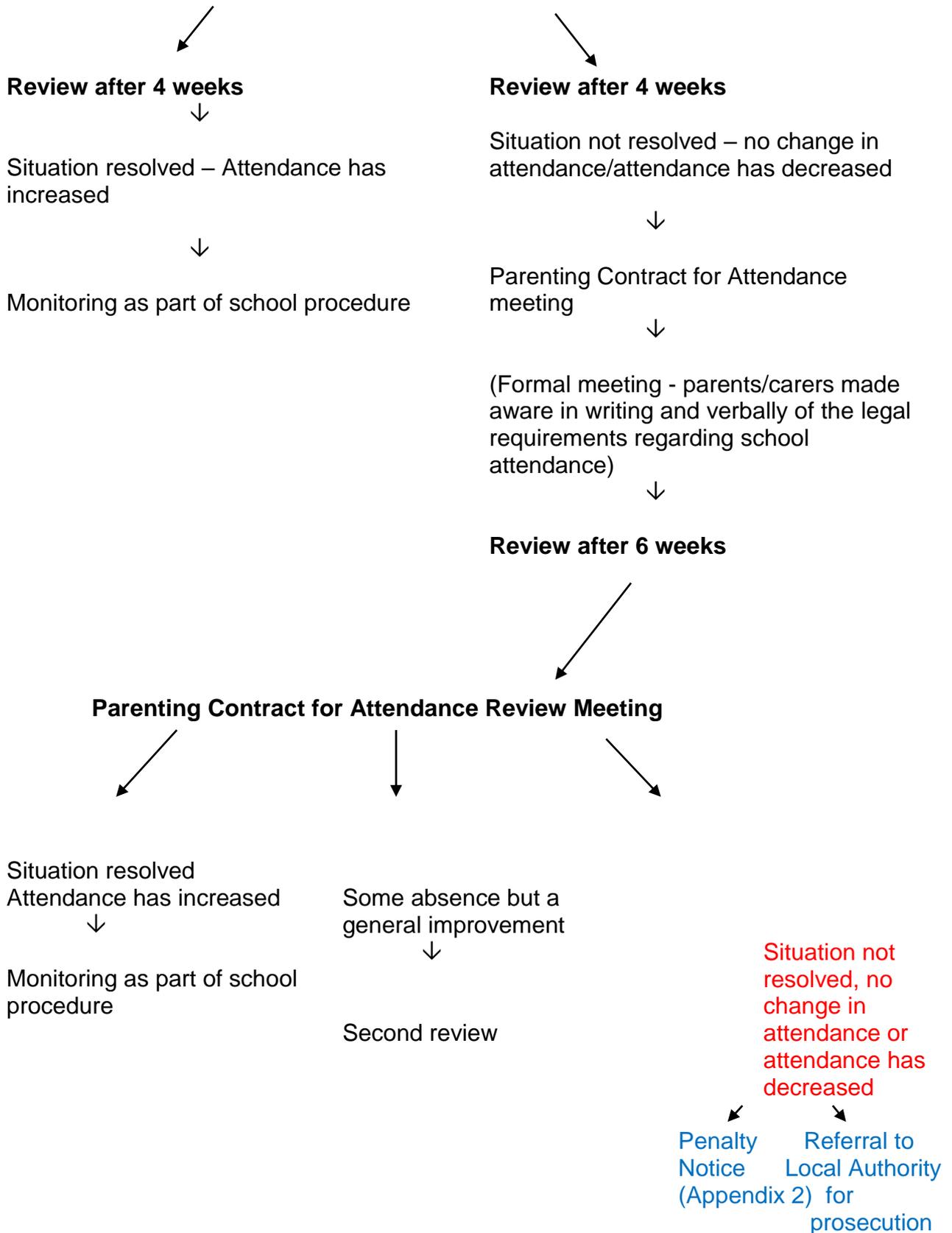
## 9. Formal guidance informing this policy

- ❖ Education Act 1996 which states if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.
- ❖ Pupil Regulations 2006 amended April 2013
- ❖ Parental responsibility measures – regarding Penalty Notices (Fines)
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE 2013 – keeping children safe.
- ❖ Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE Jan 2013 – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- ❖ Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – June 2014
- ❖ Children missing education – children who are not on roll of school
- ❖ School Attendance – DFE November 2013
- ❖ Parental Responsibility Measure - Nov 2013
- ❖ South Gloucestershire Council local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Penalty Notices – updated April 2017

**APPENDIX I**

**School Attendance Meeting with parents/carer**

For attendance concerns not reaching our 96%+ target or high number of broken weeks, absence each term, frequent minor medical absence and persistent late arrival.



## Appendix 2

### Penalty Notice Flow Chart

