



## **Stockham School Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction:**

Stockham School is an outstanding school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment, that enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

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 your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the collective responsibility of the parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our regular school newsletter;
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), 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 unavoidable reasons like illness, medical/dental appointments, which necessarily falls within school time, emergencies or any other extenuating circumstances. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences that are not properly explained
- Children who arrive at school unreasonably late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best discussed between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please do not cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and can often make things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Please do discuss with the school if you are having particular difficulties with supporting your child with any of these supportive approaches and we will endeavour help in any way we can.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

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

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is recorded to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is taken seriously and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Teaching assistant, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete an Early Help Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about matters around the school, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by please making sure we always have an up to date number to avoid any important matters that may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The County Attendance Team:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the

Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summons to Court.

"If any child of compulsory school age (The term before they are 5 years of age) who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent from the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 and email contact: [attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing or unsettling for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 8:40 **a.m.** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 8:50 **a.m.** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9:20 **a.m.** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Exceptional Leave:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to work with us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.

2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
3. Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
4. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
5. The Head Teacher will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
6. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised in Years 2, 6, 9 and 11.
7. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
8. Exceptional leave would always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
9. Exceptional leave would always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
10. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

**The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summon each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.**

#### **School targets, projects and special initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Our school attendance target is published each year with other attendance updates on the school newsletter.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our aim is to achieve better than this target however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our school newsletter and we ask for your full support.

#### **People responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mrs Ruth Burbank, Head Teacher

Dr Jan Butler, Governor with responsibility for attendance

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

**Date of Policy**

March 2021 (to be reviewed March 2022)

---

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Stockham School.

Signed:

Child's Name:

Year:

# Temporary Addition to Attendance Policy for the period of September 2020 – July 2021

## Coronavirus Attendance Policy

### Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices

New category of non-attendance 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus'. This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- Contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- Prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus

### Codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak, in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus':

- Pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X
- Schools will continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

### Examples of code X are:

- Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

**If a pupil tests negative** and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to COVID-19:

- They can stop self-isolating and return to school
- If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. (*Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.*)

### If a pupil tests positive:

- They should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. *They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia).* This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. **Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests**

**positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.**

- If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

**If the member of the household tests negative:**

- The pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school.
- Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

**If the household member tests positive:**

- The pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.
- In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.
- Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus.

The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 10 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus.

In the event of a confirmed coronavirus case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period. Note that in this situation the wider household will NOT need to isolate.

- Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine:

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

- Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only:

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that children can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able



to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.

Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. *Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.*

## Local lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown.

Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

## Staff Attendance

The above guidance applies to all Stockham School staff. Should a member of staff display symptoms of coronavirus whilst at school they will immediately leave the site and remain at home until they have had a negative coronavirus test or until they have isolated for a period of ten days.

**Please note: should you require a test for covid-19 visit: [nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test](https://nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test)**

