

Stanley Grove Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 At Stanley Grove we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 Stanley Grove Primary School values all its pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.4 At Stanley Grove we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it should be read in conjunction with other policies such as child protection and safeguarding, behaviour, exclusion and supporting pupils at school with medical conditions. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2. Legal Framework

GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITY GUIDANCE REGARDING COVID 19 WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN USING THESE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FROM SEPTEMBER 2020 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 18.

2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. **Categorising absence**

3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

3.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.5 **Illness** In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. Parents are advised that a child's absence may not be authorised even if medical evidence has been provided and decisions to authorise absence will be made on a case by case bases.

3.6 **Medical/Dental Appointments** Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. If parents insist on taking their children to appointments during the school day, the child may be given an unauthorised absence. Parents must show the appointment card to school at least a day before the appointment. Parents are advised that a child's absence may not be authorised even if medical evidence has been provided and decisions to authorise absence will be made on a case by case bases.

3.7 **Other Authorised Circumstances** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. visiting a parent in prison, social worker contact time or a part time timetable agreed as part of a gradual admission process or reintegration package.

3.8 **Excluded (No alternative provision made)** Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. For exclusions of two days or more, the child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home in liaison with the SLT.

3.9 **Family Holidays and Extended Leave** Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school

during term time for the purpose of a holiday and are made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year, which none of our children can afford to do. To this end, the majority will be refused.

3.9.1 Parents wishing to take their child on a family visit during term time must complete a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form **before** travel arrangements are made. The Principal may request to see return tickets before considering the request. As the majority of requests will be refused, parents are advised to seek advice from school before purchasing their tickets. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Length of the proposed leave
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record (particularly the previous 12 months)
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- When the request was made
- Proximity of Assessments and public examinations
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed

3.9.2 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing if received 2 weeks prior to the planned absence. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

3.9.3 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

3.9.4 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the absence still occurs, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice of unauthorised absence.

3.10 **Religious Observance** Stanley Grove acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. Due to the cultural nature of our school, the school promises to make every effort to close the school in celebration of Eid al Addha and Eid al Fitr, in accordance with the diary dates specified by the Muslim Council of Britain, ensuring that children are still accessing 190 days of education during the academic year.

3.10.1 It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

3.10.2 Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for religious observance.

3.10.3 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be

designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than two days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

3.10.4 Where possible, Stanley Grove will amend the school calendar to enable us to close the school on days when the majority of pupils will be participating in a Religious Observance. The school will maintain the statutory number of school days.

3.11 **Traveller Absence** The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

3.11.1 To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

3.11.2 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

3.11.3 When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

3.11.4 Stanley Grove will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at Stanley Grove will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

3.11.5 Stanley Grove can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

3.11.6 Stanley Grove will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

3.11.7 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

3.11.8 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

3.12 **Late Arrival** Registration begins at 9:00am, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late but present for the session (L). The number of minutes late will be logged. The register will close at 9.30am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (U), but the partial absence will not be authorised and will count as an unauthorised absence for that school session.

3.12.1 On late arrival, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that the school can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. Children will be given a red late slip to take to their class teacher. Children arriving in class late without a slip must be redirected to the office immediately.

3.12.2 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival (after close of register) can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment (M).

3.13 **Unauthorised absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

3.13.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays
- Leave to deal with an emergency abroad
- Family visits taken without the authorisation of school
- Keeping a child off school during a school trip
- More than 2 days to deal with a family emergency in the UK
- A day off to treat nits and head lice

4. **Deletions from the Register**

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Transfer between schools
- Failure to return from leave after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)

4.2 Stanley Grove will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

5. **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 5.1 At Stanley Grove we believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.
- 5.2 As such, the **Governing Body** will:
- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
 - Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
 - Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
 - Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
 - Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
 - Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
 - Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
 - Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
 - Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
 - Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
 - Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- 5.3 The **School Pastoral Team** will:
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
 - Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
 - Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
 - Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed every year
 - Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
 - Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
 - Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
 - Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
 - Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
 - Ensure that systems to monitor, record and report the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
 - Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
 - Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
 - Where necessary employ a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
 - Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.4 **All school staff will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to monitor, record and report the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Where necessary, work with the school's Pastoral Team and other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

5.5 The school requests that **Parents and Carers** will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there, taking a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences (make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours)
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school: take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Avoid taking their child on family visits during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of making travel arrangements.

6. **Using Attendance Data**

6.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

6.2 This pupil data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention

6.3 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

6.4 Stanley Grove will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

6.5 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

7. **Support Systems**

7.1 At Stanley Grove we recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in

school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

7.2 We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

7.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Reward systems
- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Attendance commitment agreements
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups/ Buddy System
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
- Family learning
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support

7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

7.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Stanley Grove will consider the use of legal sanctions.

8. Legal Interventions

8.1 Prosecution Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

8.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

8.1.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be **fined up to £2500** and / or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

8.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

8.2 Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday or a family visit in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school

- A pupil has accumulated unauthorised absence

8.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. A Penalty Notice will be requested for each parent and for each child who fails to attend within the family unit.

8.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Updated: November 2020

Reviewed November 2021

Next update: May 2022 or when government guidelines change.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shefali Kapoor', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Shefali Kapoor
Chair of Governors