

Stroud Green Primary School



Believe and achieve

Stroud Green Primary School, part of a richly diverse community, is a place where all children flourish in a safe, happy and stimulating environment.

Attendance Policy

This policy has been developed with the school EWO, staff and children. It has also been discussed at Curriculum Committee and Governing Body.

Date of policy: 14th January 2016
Policy ratified:
Review date: Spring 2018

Introduction:

Stroud Green Primary School provides a welcoming and safe environment, so our school community can be socially inclusive and everyone active members. We want our pupils to achieve good attendance and to come to school on time. This policy is in place to ensure children, families, staff, Education Welfare Officers, social workers and other professionals can work well together to ensure all our children receive a full-time and appropriate education, which will enable them to achieve and progress, taking full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Protection Policy. Copies are available from the school office on request or can be downloaded from the website www.stroudgreen.haringey.sch.uk. A short summary is included in the school website.

1. Attendance Policy Principles:

1.1 Our policy is based on the principles that:

- all children should come to school every day and be on time
- children should only be absent or late if it is unavoidable
- good attendance provides children with the best opportunity to achieve and participate in the educational opportunities available and gain necessary life skills.
- it is important to instill good habits as early as possible i.e. from Nursery.
- good attendance and punctuality is valued and rewarded We will reward children who attend well and on time in special assemblies and recognise it when improvements are made by others.
- poor attendance and punctuality affects the learning of all our children and not just those directly involved.

1.2. The government recommendation is that the school attendance of every child should attend and be on time at least 95% of the time (this equates to just 10 days absence in an academic year). All children are monitored weekly once their attendance drops below 90% and trends or patterns in their attendance are identified. Persistent absentees (i.e. those with attendance below 85%) are given targets for improvement and may be identified for specific interventions such as SEAL groups.

1.3 Good attendance and punctuality is a priority for all staff who ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Staff are aware that poor attendance can be an indicator that there may be underlying child protection concerns.

1.4 We have a framework, with defined and agreed roles and responsibilities which promotes consistency in the school response to attendance, punctuality and absence and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. The Attendance Team will liaise with home or other agencies about a child's attendance and punctuality as necessary.

1.5 We provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils to develop regular, punctual attendance habits.

1.6. We have a **systematic approach in gathering & analysing attendance related data and use** electronic registration systems to improve the accuracy .We ensure standardisation and consistency in recording.

1.7. Through regular analysis of attendance data we identify any patterns e.g. poor attendance of particular groups within the school, including those with special educational needs.

2. Absences

The head teacher (not parents or carers) are required to classify every half-day absence from school as either authorised or unauthorised. Information about a child's attendance and punctuality will be recorded on Pupil Progress Sheets termly and on the end of Year Report. We always require information about the reason for children's absences. The school is required to investigate all cases of pupils who have high levels of absences (Appendix 3)

2.1. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons when a child is absent from school for illness or when there is an unavoidable reason.

2.2.. Unauthorised absences are recorded when the school does not consider that the reasons provided by parents or carers are reasonable and for which no permission has been given.

Unauthorised absences include:

- term time holidays
- to take him/her out for new shoes
- to collect relatives from the airport
- to care for other family members
- to interpret for me
- because it is his or her birthday etc.
- visits to the hairdressers
- staying at home to wait for deliveries or services
- additional support during school time which is not part of a child's recognised SEN/Medical need.
- truancy. absences which are never properly explained
- arrival after the close of registers

3. Notification of Absences

3.1. If a child is unfit for school, their parent(s) should contact the school on the first day of their absence, in person or by telephone.

3.2. If your child is genuinely ill, and there is more than an average level of absence, it may be wise to obtain confirmation that he/she is unfit for school from your GP, or provide evidence of any prescribed medication. If the absence is considered unjustified, the school will contact you to discuss the situation and agree measures for reducing the absences. (Pupils who cannot

attend school for medical reasons (physical or psychological) may qualify for tuition under the Local Authority's Medical Needs Policy). In the event that your child has excessive absences from school that are not supported with medical evidence, the school will be expected to make a referral to the EWS. You may also be asked for permission to refer your child to the school nurse. You may be liable to legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

4. Leave of Absence

- 4.1. There are some circumstances in which absences during term time may be authorised at the discretion of the headteacher. These include:
- Leave for a child whose parents have to work temporarily outside London/UK during term time, when it is not feasible for the child to travel to Stroud Green Primary; and when the child is educated in an alternative learning environment
 - Special family events including bereavements, births and weddings
 - Religious observance
 - Long term medical treatment
 - Absence resulting from a one-off visit to a sick relative
- 4.2. Before leave of absence is granted the headteacher will take into consideration:
- your child's attendance history
 - previous requests for leave in term time
 - the likely impact on your child's attainment, and
 - individual circumstances
- 4.3 Leave for up to ten days per school year **may** be granted if the headteacher considers there are special reasons. Ten days leave is not a right for parents and carers. It is a discretionary period to be used by schools in exceptional circumstances. Leave may be refused for a variety of reasons for example:
- if a child has had an unsatisfactory attendance record or at crucial times of the year (e.g. during exams).
 - requests for leave beyond ten days a year will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
 - **family holidays taken during term time will not be authorised.** There are 38 weeks in the year when schools are open, and 14 weeks when families can take holidays. Holiday prices and the fact that parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school are **not** special circumstances. Taking your child out of school during term time for holidays is likely to impact on their attainment. Haringey Council's advice to schools is not to allow holidays to be taken in term time.
- 4.4. If your child takes unauthorised holidays or takes pupil leave of absence for longer than the time agreed by your child's Headteacher, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in:
- your child losing their school place
 - you being issued with a fixed penalty notice
 - you being subject to legal action by the authority that could result in a fine of up to £2,500 per child.

.4.5. Parents are required to complete a written request for leave of absence **before** booking a trip (Appendix 1) Forms are available to download from the website or at the school office. Parents may be required to attend a formal meeting with the head teacher.

4.6 Parent/carers will be notified in writing of the head teacher's decision and of the implications if the leave is taken without authorisation (Appendix 2a or 2b)

4.7 Details of the child and parent/carer who take unauthorised exceptional leave are given to the EWO who may issue a FPN of £60 (rising to £120) per child per parent. If unauthorised exceptional leave has been taken previously a Fixed Penalty Notice or summons to Magistrates Court may be issued.

5. Registration

We have clearly defined registration procedures that comply with legislation and DfE and Haringey guidance.

5.1. Morning registration is between 8:50 am and 9:30 am. KS2 children are collected from the Junior playground by staff when the bell goes at 8:50am. KS1 children are collected from the Infant playground at 8:55 am. Children in Nursery and Reception are delivered to their children's classroom by their parents at 8:55 am.

5.2. Children arriving after the class has been collected from the playground must report to the office in order to receive an attendance mark. Their attendance will be recorded as 'late (before registers closed: code L)'. Children arriving after the registers have closed at 9.30am or later without good reason, will be recorded as 'late (after registers closed: code U)'. This will be reported as an unauthorised absence on the child's end of year report.

5.3. Afternoon registration is between 1:10 pm and 1:40 pm. All children must be in their classes between 1.10 pm and 1.40pm in order to receive an attendance mark from their class teacher. Children arriving after 1.40pm must report to the office in order to receive an attendance mark. Their attendance will be recorded as 'late (before registers closed: code L)'. Children arriving after the registers have closed at 1:40pm or later without good reason will be recorded as 'late (after registers closed: code U)'. This will be reported as an unauthorised absence on the child's end of year report. Parents and carers will be informed of any recurring patterns of lateness or absence (Appendix 3)

5.4. We know there are periods when families face particular difficulties which may impact on punctuality e.g. prolonged illness, transport problems, issues around personal safety. Once informed by parents or carers we will support the family accordingly and devise a plan that is as supportive as possible.

6. Supporting Families

Our policy ensures we have systems in place to support all families to improve the attendance and punctuality of their children. We work especially hard to improve the attendance of any persistent absentees and this group is monitored carefully and supported accordingly.

6.1 The designated senior member of staff for liaison with Educational Welfare Service and other agencies is the Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jo Bartlett (DHT/DCPO). She meets with the allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) fortnightly.

6.2 The DHT and EWO review data weekly and families are alerted to concerns that arise by letter or are invited to school to attend an Attendance Clinic. Clinics are arranged to raise concerns with families where they exist and develop strategies for improving attendance or punctuality. The EWO will also arrange additional visits with parents/carers either in their homes or at the Education Office in Station Road.

6.3 Initial enquiries/interventions are carried out prior to referral to EWS and clear procedures for referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) using EWS referral forms are followed as appropriate. EWS will advise us regarding possible legal action to support improved school attendance, where necessary.

6.4 If a child is reluctant to come to school, parents are asked to contact the school as early as possible so we can fully understand the difficulties. We may involve the learning mentor, direct the child to clubs or enrichment activities, or put in place a pastoral support plan.

6.5. We ensure pupils absent on medical grounds have the educational support they need.

- a) The DHT is responsible for dealing with pupils who cannot attend on medical grounds.
- b) She will notify EWO if a pupil is likely to be absent for more than 15 working days
- c) Supply relevant information about pupil capabilities, progress & programmes of work.
- d) Liaise with home and hospital services to set up a personal education plan and provide work packs if required within 5 working days and work programmes on a termly basis.
- e) Keep the family informed about events and encourage and facilitate liaison with peers.
- f) Monitor progress and reintegration into school.
- g) Pupils will not be removed from roll without parental consent unless medically certified as unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before the end of the primary phase.

6.6 We recognise the needs of pupils reintegrating following significant periods of absence. We will be sensitive to individual needs and circumstances of pupils returning from long periods of absence/from exclusion. We will involve and inform all key staff in the reintegration process and agree a timescale for review of any reintegration plan. We provide mentoring and feedback where appropriate, as identified in Personal Education Plans for 'Looked After' Children or in Pastoral Support Programmes. We make use of peer support and mentoring for pupils considered to be vulnerable. We involve parents at every opportunity.

6.7 If it is necessary to secure the support of the Educational Welfare Officer, a referral will be made and we will work together with the family to resolve the problem. We can arrange for a translator for parents that require this input. Parents and carers may wish to contact our Education Welfare Officer to ask for advice or support with attendance or punctuality. Education Welfare Officers work independently of the school.

7. Monitoring and Review

Improved school attendance is made a feature of the School Improvement Plan and is related directly to our values and ethos in a number of ways: The DHT/DCPO, is the designated senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance. She works closely with the Attendance Team, which meets regularly to review systems and data. Attendance officers have responsibility for data collection/inputting, communicating with families and staff about absences and may make first day absence calls to key children identified for support. The headteacher reviews absence monitoring sheets for authorisation, Support staff help to record punctuality in the mornings and to meet and greet children with issues around attendance/punctuality. We monitor progress in attendance closely and set challenging but meaningful school attendance targets. We analyse attendance data in terms of year and class groups, ethnicity and gender and target school actions and resources accordingly. The Designated Child Protection Officer and Senco monitor the attendance of pupils that they work with. We identify patterns of irregular attendance/lateness and take action to address these. We provide termly opportunities for reporting to parents and carers about individual pupils' attendance figures. We make clear the link between good attendance and improvements in academic attainment and social development. We report on attendance to governors via Curriculum Committee meetings and head teacher's reports to full Governing Body. We provide data to the Local Authority and DfE, recording data for the full three terms. Governors review the Attendance Policy on a regular basis.

Appendix 1: Pupil Leave of Absence request form



Date of application :

Number of leave requests made during current year:

Pupil's name & date of birth:.....

Class:.....

Dates requested: from to

Number of days:.....

Reason for absence:

Name of parent (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Signature:.....

Appendix 2: Authorised Absence



**Stroud Green Primary
Woodstock Road
Finsbury Park
London N4 3EX**

Date

**Name
Address**

Dear

Re: Request for leave of absence to be taken during term time

Pupil's name & date of birth:.....

Dates requested: from to

Thank you for your request for leave to be taken during term time.
We have decided to authorise your child's absence from.....

to 8.50am on.....

In reaching our decision, we have taken into account:

- our policy on attendance and punctuality;
- the effect this absence will have on your child's education and achievement;
- your child's attendance record and previous holidays taken during term time.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 2b: Unauthorised absence



**Stroud Green Primary
Woodstock Road
Finsbury Park
London N4 3EX**

Date

**Name
Address**

Dear

Re: Request for leave to be taken during term time

Pupil's name & date of birth:.....

Dates requested: from

to

We are unable to authorise your request for leave during term-time. In reaching our decision, we have taken into account:

- Local Authority guidance and the school's policy on attendance and punctuality;
- the effect this absence will have on your child's education and achievement;
- your child's attendance record and previous holidays taken during term time.

As you know, we believe that it is important for children to attend school regularly so that they can take full advantage of school and gain the skills which will equip them for life. When they are absent not only do they miss lessons, but their irregular attendance makes it more difficult for them to keep up. In addition, as their teacher helps them to achieve this, the quality of teaching and other children's learning is adversely affected. Our school target is for all children to be in school, on time, at least 95% of the time.

Should your child miss school regardless of this decision, we have been advised by the LA to record this as an unauthorised absence on your child's annual report.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 3: Attendance / Punctuality



**Stroud Green Primary
Woodstock Road
Finsbury Park
London N4 3EX**

Date

**Name
Address**

Dear

Re Attendance/Punctuality

I am writing to you about your child’s attendance / punctuality record.

As you know, our school expects all children to come to school every day and to be on time. We believe that it is important for children to attend school regularly so that they can take full advantage of school and gain the skills which will equip them for life.

When they are absent or late, not only do they miss lessons, but their irregular attendance makes it more difficult for them to keep up. In addition, as their teacher helps them to achieve this, the quality of teaching and other children’s learning is adversely affected. Our school target is for all children to be in school, on time, at least 95% of the time. We are obliged by the Local Authority to inform them of any pupil whose attendance falls below 85% so that their attendance can be investigated and monitored.

We have noted that between the period of _____ and _____ your child has been in school..... % of the time.
your child has been late times. (delete as appropriate)

I am therefore writing to ask you to improve your child’s lateness/attendance (delete as appropriate). Please make an appointment through the office if you think we could help in achieving this. We will continue to monitor the situation; if there is no improvement, we will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher