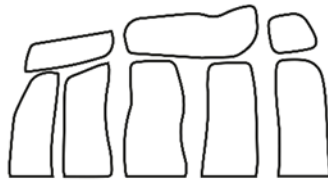


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Attendance Policy

in support of

William Stukeley C of E Primary School
and
Deeping St. Nicholas Primary School

Policy approved by Full Governing Body: November 2024

Policy to be reviewed: September 2025

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We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (February 2024) – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities
- Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024) – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure that each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore The Stukeley Federation and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The schools will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards, which will acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping. We will challenge the behaviour of those families who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open - unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and overall achievement. Any pupil's absence, or late arrival, disrupts teaching routines and so may also affect the learning of others within the class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental / legal guardian responsibility; permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an 'offence in law' and may

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result in prosecution. Although schools are not held to account for pupils' attendance until the pupils reach statutory school age, the school will monitor poor patterns of attendance in EYFS and address these as soon as concerns arise.

Members of staff responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at school

(Attendance Champions):

Mr Peter Bellamy (William Stukeley and Deeping St Nicholas)

Mrs Claire Underwood (William Stukeley and Deeping St Nicholas)

Mrs Toni Scott (William Stukeley)

Key aims

1. To continue to improve the overall attendance of pupils at The Stukeley Federation schools.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with the schools.
3. To develop a clear framework of responsibilities and to ensure that actions to promote attendance are completed.
4. To provide support and advice to parents and pupils and have clear procedures for requests of pupil absence.
5. To implement a system of rewards for good attendance.
6. To work in partnership with all stakeholders to promote attendance.

Key actions to achieve each aim

- 1) To continue to improve the overall attendance of pupils at The Stukeley Federation schools:
 - Consistently apply the Whole School Attendance Policy.
 - Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
 - Monitor attendance regularly and report findings to stakeholders.
- 2) To make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with the schools:
 - Produce termly reports for Governors, including information regarding 'Children Missing in Education' (CME) and 'Children Electively Home Educated' (EHE)
 - Use the school newsletter and other parent communication tools to remind of the importance of good attendance, when it is deemed appropriate.
 - Regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance
 - Introduce reward systems to celebrate outstanding attendance (not just 100% for the term or year) and for those pupils who have not been able to attend due to circumstances beyond their control e.g. medical conditions.
 - Provide training to school staff on attendance.

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3) To develop a clear framework of responsibilities and to ensure that actions to promote attendance are completed:

- Maintain clear and unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
- Make phone contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
- Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
- Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents)
- Provide 'Attendance Team' with time to monitor attendance and identify any patterns for individual pupils.
- Review attendance regularly.
- Ensure procedures are robust and follow the LA 'School Risk Assessment for Children Missing in Education (CME) and Children Electively Home Educated (EHE).'

4) To provide support and advice to parents and pupils and have clear procedures for requests of pupil absence:

- Highlight attendance in newsletters and Collective Worship/assemblies
- Provide clear information on the benefits of outstanding attendance.
- Provide clear individual attendance information in each child's annual report.
- Inform parents of current and previous attendance, if causing concern.
- All absence requests to be dealt with by Executive Headteacher / appropriate Senior Leader.
- Parents/carers to be informed that, should they choose to take term-time breaks, or if attendance is poor, they could be issued with a penalty notice, which may lead to a fine.
- Ensure parents/carers only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.

5) To implement a system of rewards for good attendance:

- Provide weekly certificates for attendance.
- Provide annual certificates for attendance.
- Provide a termly attendance prize for families (Christmas, Easter, and end of the summer term).
- Provide a reward for 100% attendance in a school year.
- To reward, in celebration assemblies, the class with the highest attendance each week.
- To award individual weekly 100% attendance in celebration assemblies, with the chance of winning an attendance pencil and a prize. (This will be especially awarded to children who suffer from more serious medical conditions, or who are dealing with challenging situations in their lives.)

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6) To work in partnership with all stakeholders to promote attendance:

- To communicate effectively with parents/carers
- To inspire pupils to want to attend school
- To offer support to children and families who, through exceptional circumstances, may not be able to achieve good attendance.
- To work effectively with external agencies in the support of good attendance
- To provide current and relevant data to Governors

School Day Timings

School day timings for William Stukeley C of E Primary School:

8:45am	Teachers collect children from playground.
8:55am	School starts and doors are closed. Children should be in class by this time (usually completing the first activity of the day). Children who arrive once the doors are closed must come to the front entrance and report to the office to ensure they are recorded as having arrived at school.
9:05am	Children arriving at school / in class after this time are marked as late. ('L' code)
9:30am	Registers are officially closed; children who arrive to school after this time are classified as an unauthorised absence ('U' code) for the morning session, unless an acceptable reason is given in writing.
1:00pm	Afternoon registration is taken - Reception and KS1
1:15pm	Afternoon registration - KS2
3:15pm	School day ends – EYFS & KS1
3:25pm	School day ends – KS2

School day timings for Deeping St. Nicholas Primary School:

8:40am	Teachers collect children from playground.
8:45am	School starts and doors are closed. Children should be in class by this time (usually completing the first activity of the day). Children who arrive once the doors are closed must come to the front entrance and report to the office to ensure they are recorded as having arrived at school. This is used to monitor lateness.
9:05am	Children arriving in class after this time are then marked late. ('L' code)
9:30am	Registers are officially closed; children who arrive to school after this time are classified as an unauthorised absence ('U' code) for the morning session, unless an acceptable reason is given in writing.
1:10pm	Afternoon registration
3.15pm	School day ends – EYFS & KS1
3.15pm	School day ends – KS2

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Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time. Teachers and Attendance Champions will contact parents to offer support should children regularly arrive late to school.

Illness and medical appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside of the school day. 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.

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office, by phone or in person, if their child is absent from school, providing reasons for absence. They are asked to update the school daily during the absence.

If the school has not been notified of a reason for a child's absence, a member of the Attendance Team will contact the parent/carer on the first morning (by telephone in the first instance) to ascertain the reason for the absence. Unexplained absences will be classed as 'unauthorised absence'. If the school cannot get in touch with parents/carers, we must follow the Local Authority's 'children missing in education' procedures.

If a child is off, or will be off, for 15 school days or more (consecutively or cumulatively) throughout a school year, the school is required to notify the Local Authority, completing a 'sickness return form'.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must 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.

AUTHORISED absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for good reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time) emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

UNAUTHORISED absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' approval has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time, which have not been agreed.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent feels they need support getting their child to school regularly and on time, then we will work with that family to improve the situation. If a child is absent for 10

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or more consecutive days, without permission from school, the school is required to inform the Local Authority through a Pupil Not Attending Regularly (PNAR) form.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls below **90%**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need the parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We will work with parents to understand and address any reasons for absence, including in-school barriers to attendance. Where external barriers are identified, we will signpost access to any required services, in the first instance.

We monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers in the appropriate manner. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We support parents/carers and children, through meetings or phone calls, to work to improve attendance. If necessary, the school will conduct an Early Help Assessment to formalise the support provided, sign post other support agencies and consider informing Social Care. Where there is a lack of engagement from parents, we will hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for Local Authority involvement, including:

- drawing up an action plan or attendance contract,
- further steps, such as legal intervention in the form of an Education Supervision Order (ESO),
- a penalty notice,
- prosecution by the Local Authority.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, staff from The Stukeley Federation may intensify support through statutory children's social care.

If necessary, we will work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Severe Absenteeism (SA)

Particular focus will be given to pupils who are absent from school more often than they are present (those missing **50%** or more of school). Pupils falling into this category are likely to need more intensive support from a range of partners; it is likely we will decide upon a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the Local Authority. This support may include a whole family plan, but may also include consideration of an education, health and care plan (EHCP). An alternative form of education provision may be considered, where necessary, to overcome the barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been explored, yet severe absence for unauthorised reasons remain, it is likely to constitute 'neglect'. In these instances, we will be mindful of potential safeguarding issues, and it may be necessary to begin a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024'.

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Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

The Stukeley Federation holds the same ambition for maximum attendance for our SEND pupils. We recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions, or who have special educational needs and disabilities. We will consider additional internal support (such as pastoral care, support from SENDCo) as well as wider services and external partners, which may be explored through an Early Help Assessment. Working in partnership with parents, we will make as many 'reasonable adjustments' as possible to improve attendance. This may include making timely referrals to other agencies, if required. We will monitor the attendance data of SEND children, specifically reviewing this data with leaders and supporting those who need it.

Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

The Stukeley Federation will follow the DfE guidance: 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024) where there is a pupil experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues which are affecting attendance. We will make reasonable adjustments to support attendance, always maintaining high expectations of attendance, engagement and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school. The Stukeley Federation will work with parents/carers in conversations, at an early stage, which may be through the Emotional Based School Avoidance pathway (EBSA) if required. The Stukeley Federation will also work with other professionals and provide cross-agency support, where appropriate.

Support for pupils with a social worker

The Stukeley Federation will inform the social workers of any pupils where there are unexplained absences. In addition, the social worker will be notified if a child's name is to be deleted from the register.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be applied for 'persistent poor attendance' (below 90%) or 'leaves of absence' which take the attendance figure to less than 90%. A Penalty Notice is issued under the following legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Where a child is a registered student at a school, and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school, the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled, Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £80.00 or £160.00, per parent, per child.

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Legal intervention

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful, or are not appropriate, The Stukeley Federation may work with the Local Authority's Attendance Support Team to take forward legal intervention. If necessary, the Stukeley Federation will follow guidance from the Local Authority Attendance Support Team and the latest documentation, including 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities'. The Stukeley Federation will always consider balancing reward, support for pupils and families, and sanctions, appropriately

Children Missing in Education

The school will follow the Lincolnshire County Council policy regarding Children Missing in Education, a copy of which is available on request from the school or Lincolnshire County Council.

When a pupil does not attend the school, the following procedures are in place:

- If there are safeguarding concerns, then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures will be followed immediately.
- If a message is not received from parents/carers (telephone call, answerphone message, email, or letter), school staff will attempt communications with next-in-line contacts on the pupil file. If there is no response at this point, a 'safe & well' check will be considered.
- If there are concerns during this time, children's services or the police may be contacted.
- Should a child be absent, with no explanation given for a period of 5 days, a referral will be made to the Children Missing in Education (CME) Team at Lincolnshire County Council.
- Should a child be absent for a total of four weeks, without any explanation, and after due investigation, the school will follow the CME guidance and can remove this child from the school roll. The child will lose their school place and parents/carers would have to re-apply for a place in the school should they wish their child to return – there is no guarantee that a place would be available.

The Governing Body will:

- Delegate powers and responsibilities to the Executive Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of, and comply with, this policy.
- Promote the importance of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders.
- Ensure compliance with all statutory pupil registration regulations.
- Ensure that the attendance policy is adhered to.
- Set statutory attendance targets for the year, which are realistic and challenging, in order to raise school attendance.
- Ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders.
- Ensure the Executive Headteacher, in consultation with the governing body, exercises his/her discretionary power to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances.

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- Ensure the Executive Headteacher, in consultation with the governing body, does not authorise absence if it is to the detriment of a child's education.
- Have responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation.
- Have responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- Have responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly.
- Have responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents.
- Make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy.
- Have responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Taken from *Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024) – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities*

