**Attendance Policy**

The staff of Stower Provost Community School are committed, in partnership with the parents\*, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community commendably and of which the community is proud.

\* For the purpose of this document the title parents includes guardians and carers.

**1 Introduction**

1.1 It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that as long as their child is fit and healthy enough to do so, they attend school, arriving promptly every day during term time. Irregular attendance or late arrival can have a detrimental effect on a child’s learning and confidence and be disruptive to fellow pupils. As a school, we do all we can to encourage the children to attend and we have in place appropriate procedures to monitor their attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## 2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

* An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if a child is unwell, the parent is required to write a note or telephone the school to explain the absence.
* Only the school can authorise the absence. The parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by a parent will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

* An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and parent/s.
* Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/s.

## 3 If a child is absent

3.1 The register is taken between 9.00am and 9.15am. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office. It is expected that a parent will contact the school to inform of an absence by 9.30am. The school will endeavour to contact a parent immediately if they have not already heard from them.

3.2 If a child has a medical appointment or similar, a note sent or a phone call made by a parent to the school prior to the day of absence.

3.3 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent/s, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## 4 Requests for leave of absence

4.1 It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are in school for all sessions, so that they can fulfil their learning potential. However, we do understand that there are avoidable, rare and exceptional circumstances in which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event such as a funeral or wedding. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance.

The head teacher will decide whether or not to authorise a request for absence, having considered a number of factors including:

· the child's record of attendance;

· the exceptional circumstance;

· the time of the absence, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important examinations/assessments;

If the head teacher does authorise the absence, the parent will receive a letter making clear the days that are being authorised. It might not be all the days requested, e.g. if for a wedding, it may be time to get to the wedding and for the actual event, but not time for leave either side of the event.

4.2 Due to amendments to the law in September 2013 parents can no longer request to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days for an annual holiday.

The school holiday dates are published in September for the year ahead. Parents are expected to book their family holidays during the school holidays. We recognise that there are very occasionally, exceptional circumstances, which will be given considered attention. Requests must be submitted to the head teacher at least four weeks in advance of the absence and permission “may” be given.

(for further information, please see: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/school-attendance>)

Please note: If unauthorised absence is taken, the LA may decide with the school, to issue a penalty notice.

## 5. Long-term absence

5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## 6 Repeated unauthorised absences

6.1 The school will contact the parent/s of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a number of unauthorised absences, the parent/s will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parent/s understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parent/s who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Punctuality

**7.1 Lateness**

The school actively discourages late arrivals by pupils. Late arrival may seriously disrupt the whole class. The registers close at 9.15am and any child arriving after that time will be marked as ‘late’ in the register. After 9.00am the child enters school through the main reception. Parent/s are asked to sign a book

recording the reason for the late arrival. Late after 9.15am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness by pupils will be investigated by the head teacher with the parent/s, to see if there are difficulties at home or genuine unavoidable circumstances which are contributing to lateness.

For information: The afternoon register is taken at 13.20pm as children come in from the playground.

## 8 Rewards for good attendance

8.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive a certificate of excellence for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

## 9 Attendance targets

9.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## 10 Monitoring and review

10.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

10.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

10.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.

10.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parent/s.

10.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

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