

Family of Schools Attendance Policy



B. Cordle
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- **Responsibility for Maintaining Policy**

Mrs B Cordle

- **Reviewed**

Annually

- **Policy Statement**

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Deepcar St Johns Junior School is committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

A high level of attendance at school is not only a legal requirement but is vital for all our pupils to enable a continuity of learning, thereby ensuring maximum progress for all. There is a clear link between good attendance and academic achievement, as well as enabling the development of social and emotional skills.

We aim to achieve an attendance level of 96.5%.

We also aim to minimise levels of unauthorised attendance.

We are committed to a family of school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

Aims of the Policy

- Clear procedures encouraging pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring parent/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring all teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors understand the procedures
- The commitment to allocate resources to support the policy
- Addressing attendance and inclusion issues in the curriculum
- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year

The Law

The 1996 Education Act requires that:

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly **or** are absent for more than ten days without explanation
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law

You and your child

Excellent	Your child's attendance is above 98%. As well as being an excellent attender your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education or the world of work.
Good	Your child's attendance is 96-97%. Your child is likely to achieve their grades that will give real opportunities to continue their studies or in the world of work.
Expected	Your child's attendance is 96.5% and has reached the schools target.
Needs to Improve	Your child's attendance is 94-90%. This is below the national government threshold of 95%. You may receive a letter (Letter 1) informing you that school are monitoring your child's attendance.
Concern	Your child's attendance 85-90%. You may receive a fixed penalty fine as your child is now classed as a Persistent Absentee. You will receive warning letters (letter 2+) and attendance will be monitored closely. Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for them to keep in touch with lessons and work.
Serious Concern	Your child's attendance is below 85%. Take action now. You will receive a fixed penalty notice or fine or further legal prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve. Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be impossible for them to keep in touch with lessons and work.

Persistent Absentee

School has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Pupils with attendance 90% or lower will be classed as a persistent absentee.

Under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty Fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates Court.

Partnership

What the school expects of our pupils

- That pupils **attend regularly, on time and ready to learn**
- That pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g. P.E. kit
- To report to Reception should they arrive after registration time (8:55am)
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school

What the school expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that **their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day**
- To contact school on the first day their child is absent for any reason (before 9:30am, if possible)
- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible, and to obtain an Authorised Absence Pass from the school office if unavoidable
- To arrange holidays out of school time

What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the school

- A broad, balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Liaison with officers from the Local Authority to assist and support families where needed
- Regular attendance information is given to parents/carers e.g., by newsletter, individual letter, and parent evenings. When attendance is of serious concern, contact may be made by the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)
- Attendance and Punctuality information is provided to all parents of new pupils
- Parents/carers are encouraged to make contact with school to discuss any issues impacting on their child's attendance or punctuality
- Any concerns or problems raised by parents/carers will be responded to quickly and sensitively by the school

Procedures

Registers are a legal document. Great care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately. Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly using the following procedures:

Registration

- Registers are taken at 8.55 and 1:05pm each day
- Registration is entered electronically through SIMS
- Teachers are responsible for entering registration data
- In the event of difficulties with registration on-line, an emergency paper register must be completed
- Pupils are not to be marked present on the word of another pupil
- Gaps are not to be left on the registration screen. (Use code 'N')
- A pupil **must** be marked absent if they are not present at the time of registration and marked as **L** if they arrive after the register has been taken
- Once a bona fide note has been received, codes must be changed on the e-register screen
- A code may already have been put in if a phone call has been received from a parent/carer or responsible adult
- Any family requesting leave of absence during term time must collect a request for leave of absence form from the school office. The completed request for leave of absence during term time form should be given back to the school office
- Class Teachers must make sure to inform the school office (Mrs Stocks) of any changes of address, phone contact etc. The school office will issue a new Data Collection form for the family to complete

Responding to lateness

- The school bell rings at 8:52am and 1:00pm
- Pupils arriving after 9:00 am and 1:05 pm are deemed as late
- A pupil **must** be marked as **L** if they arrive after 9:00 am or 1:05 pm
- Pupils must report to reception if they arrive after 8.55am or 1pm
- At 9.30 am and 1.30pm any pupil not in school will be marked **U**, unless another reason is known to school

Responding to absence – criteria for referral to MAST

- Home/school contact has not prompted an improvement in attendance
- Patterns of absence
- Poor overall attendance (e.g. below 90%)
- Each half term a review of individual pupil attendance takes place. Any pupil showing an attendance of below 90% for the last half term (6 weeks) is discussed and, if appropriate, a referral form is completed by the school and passed to the Prevention & Intervention Service (MAST). The pupil's name is then placed on a 'Concerns List'. The Service and school will then closely monitor the pupil's

attendance and, if necessary, make contact with the parent/carer in an attempt to resolve any issues

- If attendance continues to give cause for concern strategies will be considered and steps taken in an attempt to improve attendance and punctuality. This could include working with members of staff, the Prevention & Intervention Service or other professionals if deemed appropriate, Fixed Penalty Notices and/or Fines.
- When a pupil has not attended for 10 school days the school has a statutory responsibility to inform the Prevention and Intervention Service or Children Missing from Education Team

Children Missing from Education

Mrs Cordle, Mrs Needham and Mrs Stocks are the nominated members of school staff who liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. **Pupils who cannot be located** will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

Looked after children

Miss J Steward is the co-ordinator who liaises with the Children and Young People's Directorate Looked After Children Team. Looked After Children will be set up as an Attendance Group on SIMS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term.

Religious Observation

School 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.

- Leave may be granted for any day of religious observance if recognised by the parents/carers religious body
- Parents/carers are requested wherever possible to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than two days be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in any academic year.

Children with special educational needs

Where SEND needs affect a pupils' attendance the school will work with parents and pupils to ensure that any supportive provision is made available where appropriate to support the pupil in accessing mainstream education.

Awards and Rewards

- Assemblies are held regularly which celebrate good attendance
- Improved attendance is recognised and rewarded

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Maintain an overview of attendance through reports provided by the Head Teacher and the Local Authority via the Head Teacher report

Head Teacher

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Liaises with the Link Advisor, Inclusion Officer, Learning Mentor and other officers of the Local Authority to set targets and implement attendance strategies
- Works with the Learning Mentor, Inclusion Manager and Teachers to implement targets, review statistics and amend the policy as necessary
- Works with other schools and agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the cluster (Family of Schools)

Inclusion Manager & Learning Mentor

- Maintains an overview of attendance and manages the day to day implementation of attendance plans and strategies
- Liaises with the Prevention & Intervention officer and school office staff and Teachers to produce and evaluate attendance statistics
- Meets termly with a representative from the MAST to discuss individual pupils whose attendance is of concern, e.g. by below 90%, and agree action as necessary
- Has responsibility for monitoring the progress of children Looked After by the Local Authority (Inclusion Manager)
- Has responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education

Class Teachers

- Accurately mark registers using appropriate codes, in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001
- Attach any notes received to the register for the attention of Mrs Stocks
- Report to appropriate staff any issue or problem which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a pupil

- Promote good attendance and punctuality among the form in accordance with school policy

Attendance Administration Officer (Mrs Stocks)

- Receives updates and maintains accurate class registers on-line, in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001
- Liases with Learning Mentor and contacts pupils missing without explanation
- Maintain SIMS attendance database and update on a daily basis
- Provides statistics about attendance
- Provides reports from SIMS to governors, Head Teacher and other school staff, Local Authority officers as requested
- Provides Authorised Absence forms for each pupil who is absent when appropriate.

Prevention & Intervention Service (MAST)

- Liaise with the Head Teacher, Learning Mentor and school office staff and officers of the Local Authority to promote good attendance and punctuality within school, cluster and wider community
- Support the Head Teacher, Learning Mentor to produce, review and action the school's Attendance Plan and Attendance Policy
- Support the school to develop whole school strategies relating to attendance and inclusion. Offering advice, analysis and monitoring of attendance issues
- Work closely with school staff regarding the pupil concerns list, discuss and agree appropriate courses of action when necessary, including prosecution procedures as appropriate
- Attend appropriate meetings e.g., School Attendance and Inclusion Panel, termly review
- Take an active part in initiatives aimed at promoting attendance and punctuality e.g. conducting pupil interviews and being involved in Attendance & Punctuality Panels
- Maintain, review and analyse attendance information, statistics and reports. Provide reports to appropriate bodies e.g. governors and officers of the Local Authority

Prevention & Intervention service - MAST Representative

- Liaise with school staff regarding the attendance and punctuality of identified pupils. Receive attendance data and agree action
- Make contact with parents/carers where concern is raised regarding a pupil's attendance
- Discuss issues affecting attendance and punctuality with parents/carers and clearly outline legal responsibilities and requirements
- Record and maintain accurate information following contact

- Feedback to school staff within the agreed timescale
- Work with school staff, parents/carers and pupils to promote good attendance and punctuality
- Take part in initiatives to promote attendance and punctuality e.g. Attendance & Punctuality Panels

Authorising Absence

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence.

Even when a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence the Head Teacher will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence.

Absence may be authorised if:

- The pupil is too ill to attend school (not just a cough/cold/tummy ache)
- The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
- There is a close family bereavement (please contact Learning Mentor for support)
- The pupil/pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence
- The pupil has an authorised leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances only (only the Head Teacher can authorise)

Absence should not be authorised if:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthdays
- The pupil is absent on a leave of absence during term time for longer than authorised by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent on a request for leave of absence during term time not authorised by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut
- The pupil's attendance is below 90% and no acceptable medical evidence is provided
- The illness lasts more than 5 days without medical evidence being provided

Requests for leave of absence during term time

Following Government guidelines, **no leave of absence can be authorised by school for holidays during term time.** School expects all holidays to be arranged out of term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time. Where there are genuine exceptional circumstances the head teacher may authorise leave during term time and will consider each request on its own merit.

- Any requests for term time leave should be made in writing on a Request for Leave form, by the parent/carer providing details of the exceptional circumstances and stating specific start and end dates. The request should be submitted at least 20 working days in advance of the intended leave
- The actual date that the child will return to school should always be provided by the parent/carer
- School will inform parents in writing advising whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised, clearly stating why a decision has been taken
- Parents/carers should contact school if any holiday delays occur

Requests for leave of absence during term time will not be authorised

- When the holiday is to be taken during the first two weeks in September
- During school examinations, timed assessments, testing weeks or attendance monitoring periods
- When the holiday has no exceptional circumstances

If an unauthorised holiday is taken consideration could be given to issuing a Penalty Notice (see appendix). The Prevention & Intervention Service will, after consulting with school, consider each case taking into consideration any mitigating circumstances and make a decision. The Local Authority will inform the school of the outcome and carry out any necessary action.

It is essential that both the Local Authority and the school be consistent so that there can be no allegations of bias or favouritism. If it is seen that the policy is not being applied consistently the Local Authority will not be able to apply a Notice.

Pupils at risk or classified as Persistent Absentees (<90%)

- Once a pupil falls below 90% attendance and becomes a persistent absentee, Deepcar St Johns Junior School have to explain to the local authority why the pupil's attendance is low. School closely monitor pupil's level of attendance and we will write to parents once attendance falls below 90%

Letter 1 will explain that we are becoming concerned with the level of the pupil's attendance and that it will now be monitored. Parents/carers will receive Letter 2 which explains that no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence. The pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored. If improvements are not seen at this stage parents/carers will receive Letter 3 which invites them into school for an attendance review. If no improvements are made after this, School will inform the local authority who will present the parent/carer with a Penalty Notice or Fine.

Actions following a period of absence

- A meeting may be requested to discuss the return to school

Actions for monitoring pupil attendance

- Pupils with attendance above 95% - deemed good/excellent required no action
- Pupils with attendance between 90% and 94% - deemed Needs to improve, Letter 1 will be issued (copy below)
- Pupils with attendance between 85% and 90% - deemed Concern, Letter 1, 2 or 3 will be issued (copies below) Penalty notice and/or Fines may be applied for
- Pupils with attendance below 85% - deemed Serious Concern, Letter 3 will be issued and Penalty Notices and/or Fines will be applied for

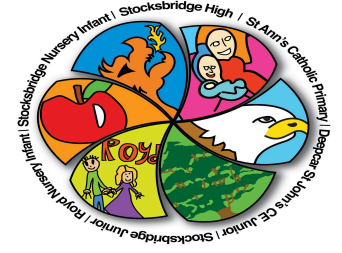
The following pages have examples of letter 1, 2 and 3

Letter 1



Stocksbridge Family of Schools

Deepcar St. John's C of E Junior School
St. Margaret Avenue, Deepcar, Sheffield S36 2TE
Tel: **0114 288 3878** Fax: **0114 283 1952**



Dear Parent/Carer,

Notice of attendance percentage

Pupil:
Class:
Date:

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance is currently _____ which is below our schools target of 96.5%

Because of this Deepcar St Johns Junior School will closely monitor your child's attendance for the next 3 weeks, school expect to see improvements in your child's attendance. It is important therefore, that you contact school on the first day of any absence or if there is any problem which may be causing your child to miss school. Absences may be unauthorised unless you provide a valid reason that is accepted by school.

Deepcar St Johns Junior School is committed to raising the profile of attendance in school, it is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day.

Please give this your urgent attention. If you wish to discuss the matter further please contact me.

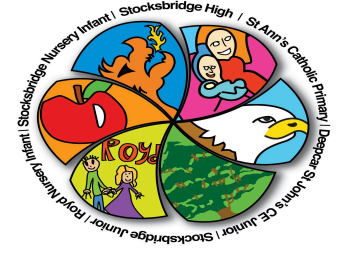
Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Needham
Learning Mentor

Letter 2



Stocksbridge Family of Schools



Deepcar St. John's C of E Junior School

St. Margaret Avenue, Deepcar, Sheffield S36 2TE
Tel: 0114 288 3878 Fax: 0114 283 1952

Notice of attendance percentage and need to improve

Pupil:

Class:

Date:

We wrote to you recently informing you that we would monitor your child's attendance as this was a concern. However improvements have not been made, because of this School will closely monitor your child's attendance for the next 3 weeks and you may be invited to an "Attendance Meeting" where we can discuss your child's attendance in more detail and offer support to enable it to be improved. School will not be able to authorise any future absences unless it is for exceptional circumstances authorised by the Head teacher or medical reasons with medical proof. Any absence not authorised will be recorded by a (O) on your child's attendance record.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time, and failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

Deepcar St Johns Junior School is committed to raising the profile of attendance in school, it is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day.

Please give this your urgent attention. If you wish to discuss the matter further please contact me.

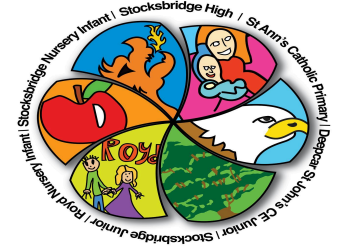
Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Needham
Learning Mentor

Letter 3



Stocksbridge Family of Schools



Deepcar St. John's C of E Junior School
St. Margaret Avenue, Deepcar, Sheffield S36 2TE
Tel: **0114 288 3878** Fax: **0114 283 1952**

Request to Attendance Review Meeting at school

Pupil:
Class:
Date:

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has been monitored for at least six weeks and is **currently %**. This is significantly below our schools attendance target of 96.5%

Because of this I would appreciate it if you could attend the following Attendance Review Meeting at school on:

An Attendance Review Meeting is to discuss the issues surrounding your child's poor attendance and offer support to you and your family to help improve your child's attendance. It is important that you attend the meeting in person. Failure to attend this review may result in School making a referral for a further attendance review meeting with the Local Authority.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, and failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

Deepcar St Johns Junior School is committed to raising the profile of attendance in school, it is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day.

Please give this your urgent attention

Yours sincerely,

Julie Needham
Learning Mentor

Appendix - Penalty Notices

New provisions have been made within the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle the issue of truancy and irregular school attendance. These include Penalty Notices and Parenting Contracts. Sheffield Local Authority officers will abide by the following Code of Conduct and government guidance set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 when administering Penalty Notices.

1. When a Penalty Notice may be administered

Sheffield Local Authority officers may administer a Penalty Notice in the following circumstances:

Phase 1 – Commenced 11/04/05

- As a result of a term time holiday that a Head Teacher has not authorised see *previous page*

Phase 2 – Commenced 01/09/05

- As a result of being stopped for the second time during truancy sweeps where there is an unacceptable reason for the child being absent from school and they are with their parent/carer.

Phase 3 – Commencing 01/01/06

- As an alternative to court prosecution by Sheffield City Council
 1. Where a child is attending school less than 90%, of which at least 20% of the absence is unauthorised without statutory defence.
 2. Where the parent/carer is judged capable of making sure their child attends regularly, but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.
 3. Penalty Notices will be used at an earlier stage than a court prosecution, before attendance problems become severe.

1.1. In all of the above phases, the child must also have an attendance record of less than 90%, with at least 20% of the absence being unauthorised.

1.2. When considering the use of a Penalty Notice, Sheffield Local Authority officer's first response will be in the form of a formal written warning. In exceptional circumstances, however, a Penalty may be used as a first response. This could be where the unauthorised absence was for an extended period and condoned by the parent, for example where the parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation.

Further information is available in guidance notes, a copy of which is held in school, titled **Education Related Provisions included in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Penalty Notice**