

# Standens Barn Primary School

## Attendance Policy



Document Title	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
Approved By:	Governing Body of Standens Barn Primary School
Approval Date:	September 2024
Review Frequency:	3 Years
Review Due:	September 2027

This policy reflects the vision and values of Standens Barn Primary School. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available on the school website to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school.

Standens Barn Primary School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that "parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly" (DfE 1999).

Standens Barn Primary School promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. It is very important that children arrive and leave school on time and that they avoid taking holidays in term time. The school will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of this policy.

We feel the whole school community takes responsibility for attendance.

## Aims

Our expectation for attendance is a minimum of 96% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the School Attendance Support Service so that all pupils can achieve their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Attendance is a national priority and all schools have to submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high examination performance.

## **Roles & Responsibilities:**

### **LAC**

The LAC is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **Alongside the DDSL and office attendance team**

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

## Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day at 9 a.m. and 1p.m.

## School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow daily attendance procedures:

**All procedures based on those from West Northants Local Authority  
Shared and discussed with School Attendance Support Service  
Updated June 2024**

<b>Step 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents phone school to inform of child's absence.</li><li>• If a parent informs school via email, office staff follow this up with a phone call asap</li></ul>
<b>Step 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If school have not received a reason for absence, the office team will phone <b>all</b> contacts in Arbor to try and find out the reason asap.</li><li>• This will be recorded on Arbor.</li></ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If contact has not been made then office team will send email via Arbor to the parent with responsibility asap.</li><li>• It will be a standard email but also highlighting that a home visit may be conducted if no contact has been made. At this stage, office staff will inform DSL in school.</li><li>• This will also be recorded on My Concern asap.</li></ul>
<b>Step 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The safeguarding team will consult with each other on risk and the degree of vulnerability of child and family. If the safeguarding team are not reassured the child is safe then a home visit will be conducted.</li><li>• The home visit will be done by 2 members of staff- the decision to do this could be on the same day, after 2 days, but will <b>automatically</b> take place on the 3rd day.</li><li>• Staff conducting the visit will knock on the door and take step back 2 metres from the main door.</li><li>• If no response, staff will post written correspondence through letterbox. Staff will also take their identification badges and knock on the doors of neighbours and ask if they have any knowledge of children's whereabouts.</li><li>• All information will be recorded on My Concern</li></ul>

**If the child has not been seen and the parents or carers have not made contact, schools must report the child as a Child Missing from Education (once these checks are completed or **by day 5**, whichever is earlier)**

Office staff will always request evidence of medical appointments, if this is not seen the absence will be unauthorised.

Teaching staff to be mindful of children with low attendance- always ask class teacher if child needs to go home and then always discuss with office staff who can look at overall attendance.

### **HOLIDAY REQUESTS:**

As a school we strongly discourage the taking of holidays during term-time. They cause disruption to the child's learning, and can represent a significant amount of lost schooling. All holiday will be treated as unauthorised, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' which need to be discussed with the Headteacher prior to any holiday time being taken and should in order to count as 'exceptional' either be an emergency situation or known about in advance.

Parents/ carers to complete request of absence forms for holidays.

Office staff ask parents to write their child's current percentage onto the forms so a discussion has been held between school and parent.

Forms to include how many sessions and lessons the child will miss during their absence.

Office team to give form to Head teacher.

**If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action.**

**This could include:**

- a Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine
- prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000
- prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

## Responsibility of Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, with reason and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure the school have accurate information about who holds Parental Responsibility for their children i.e. names, addresses and telephone numbers. **This information should be updated at least annually and parents must be told of the need to inform the Head Teacher if there are changes to the details given on admission.**
- › Ensure that the correct and updated names and telephone numbers of 2/3 emergency contact persons are given for their child(ren)
- › Provide updated information in the event that anyone other than the parent/carer is to collect a child from school.
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and provide appointment letters/documents when this has not been possible

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action.

This could include:

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Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A

child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. You can find more information here:

[Attendance and behaviour advice for parents | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](http://westnorthants.gov.uk)

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](http://blog.gov.uk)

### **Punctuality**

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time. It is important that children arrive on time to avoid disruption to classes. Staff are on duty at 8.50am and all children should be in the play ground by this time and entering the school between 8.50am and 8.55am. The register is taken at this time and the school gates are locked at 9.00am.
- Children who are late after 9:00am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:30am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.
- The first few minutes of school is a crucial time for children to get settled into class. When a child arrives late for school, it not only disrupts the rest of the class, but they miss out on this crucial time.
- Being punctual is an important life skill. Ensuring that your child is punctual gets them into good habits for their future.
- Arriving just 5 minutes late every day equals 3 days of education over the whole year. Arriving half an hour late every day is equivalent to 18 days absence.

Lateness is monitored closely- attendance procedures as outlined previously will be followed if persistent lateness occurs.

### **Absences**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:15 am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office 01604 413151 or emailing [helen.shipley@sbps.inmat.org.uk](mailto:helen.shipley@sbps.inmat.org.uk)
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence

of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.

- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted by 9:30am.
- To apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.
  
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.
- The fact that a parent has submitted a note in relation to a particular absence **does not mean that the school must accept the explanation as a valid reason for absence**. Absence without a valid reason, or where no explanation is offered at all is recorded as unauthorised absence.
- No child is allowed to leave school during school hours unless collected by a parent or bona fide adult. Parents must visit the school office on such occasions and provide an appropriate reason.

### **Authorised Absences**

The Department for Children and Families (DCSF) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention.
- Days of religious observance notified in advance.
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g bereavement, serious illness).
- Lateness due to student living outside the catchment area. Consideration will be made as to whether parents choose to reside outside the catchment area when deciding if an absence is authorised.

There are other absences, such as "Approved Sporting Activity" that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school and professional discretion will need to be used in

these cases about whether the absence can be authorised. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/ carers.
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

The DFE guidelines state that the following activities would classify as unauthorised:

- minding the house
- caring for relatives
- awaiting repair people
- shopping
- a birthday or family celebration
- unauthorised holiday
- parental illness
- excessive illness without a medical reason

The DFE's guidelines look at the area of "Special Occasions" and make clear that only truly exceptional occasions should be classified as authorised. This will be decided at the discretion of the Headteacher. We ask parents to notify the school well in advance (preferably 4 weeks notice) of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. The DFE's guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. A note from home therefore does not automatically make an absence valid/justified/authorized.

Example of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling - Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative - only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional

- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education
- Social Work Service
- Religious observance - The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs". This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions.
- Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time
- Weddings of parents and siblings - weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time.

In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulty if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

**Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:**

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitment.
- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties

- Family holiday
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problem

### **Collection of Children at The End of The School Day**

- Children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day between 3.15 and 3.25 pm.
- Parents/carers should phone school to inform of late collection. If a parent informs school via email, office staff follow this up with a phone call. Staff then inform class teacher.
- If school have not received a reason for late collection, class teacher keep child in own classroom until 3:30.
- If child is not collected by 3:30, class teacher takes child to main office area and informs the office team.
- Class teacher/Office Staff will phone **all** contacts in **Arbor** to try and find out the reason. This will be recorded on Arbor.
- If telephone contact has not been made then office team will send email via Arbor to the parent with responsibility. It will be a standard email but also highlighting that a home visit may be conducted shortly if no contact has been made.
- At this stage, office staff will inform DSL in school.
- If child has not been collected by 3:45 pm the child will go into after school club (no charge if first occasion and depending on circumstance)
- When adult collects, remind them of home time collection times, school expectations and that we may charge them the fee for after school club if this happens again (x3 occasions and/or dependent on circumstances).
- If the child has not been collected by 4pm, the safeguarding team will consult with each other on risk and the degree of vulnerability of child and family.
- If the safeguarding team are not reassured then a home visit will be conducted without child present.
- The home visit will be conducted by 2 members of staff.
- A DSL may ask for all information to be recorded on My Concern as well as Arbor.
- Safeguarding procedures will follow depending on outcome of home visit. Police or Social care may be contacted for advice/ support. DSL/ DDSL to remain in school until child is collected by either parent, emergency contact or social careworkers. If the child is taken into the care of Social Care, they will take the responsibility for tracing the parents / carers and feeding back to school the outcomes of the situation. Children's Social Care: 0300 126 700

- › If child is repeatedly collected late then a My Concern should be written by class teacher.
- › DSL will contact parents to discuss, remind them of home time collection times, school expectations and that we may charge them for the fee for after school club if this happens again (x3 occasions and/or dependent on circumstances).

### Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Regular reminders in newsletters about attendance and it's importance
- Sending letters and emails about attendance to parents
- Certificates for children achieving 100% attendance at the end of the year
- 100% attendance stickers given out at the end of term
- Postcards and emails where improvement has been noted
- Weekly attendance trophies
- Termly House Trophy
- Yearly House Trophy

### Reducing persistent and severe absence

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

Stage 1:	Letter 1 Remind parents of current attendance
Stage 2:	Letter 2 Arrange meeting with HT to discuss attendance Set out targets including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents/carers must engage with all professionals</li> <li>• ensure child attends school regularly for 98% for term. . ./or following 3 weeks</li> <li>• parents/carers must provide medical evidence for any given appointments or medical/illness absence or absence due to illness may be unauthorised</li> </ul> Offer EHA Offer breakfast club  Offer & arrange parent contract & new strategies if applicable State a referral may be made to EIP Team  From Term 3: email sent as a reminder to parents when attendance drops below 96%

Stage 3:	Letter 3 Further strategies may be offered dependent on level of engagement at Stage 2 &/or referral may be made to the attendance team at the Local Authority.
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Colour coded attendance card will be sent out 3 times a year with the school report.  
**Children Missing Education**

### What are a school's responsibilities when a child is absent?

We will assess the child's safeguarding risk at their own address using **thresholds and pathways**. For example, is there a risk of forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, radicalisation, honour based violence? If the judgement is the child is at risk of harm, we will contact the police or **social care immediately**.

If a pupil is absent, we have a responsibility to contact the parent or carer **on the first day of absence** and continue to make every effort to locate the pupil. When we have identified the child is not in school, we will follow the procedure below.

A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent or carer that the child is safe at home.

Response from parent	Next step from school
There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is safe with them	Ask for reason for absence and record on your school's attendance management system
The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe	The school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•  <a href="#">Risk assessment and CME checklist (PDF 404KB)</a></li> </ul>
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned	School to advise the parent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing</li> <li>• Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searing for the child</li> <li>• Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she</li> </ul>

has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment

- Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing

**Once you have completed these checks (or within 5 days, whichever is earlier)**

<b>Step 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents phone school to inform of child's absence.</li><li>• If a parent informs school via email, office staff follow this up with a phone call asap</li></ul>
<b>Step 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If school have not received a reason for absence, the office team will phone <b>all</b> contacts in Arbor to try and find out the reason asap.</li><li>• This will be recorded on Arbor.</li></ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If contact has not been made then office team will send email via Arbor to the parent with responsibility asap.</li><li>• It will be a standard email but also highlighting that a home visit may be conducted if no contact has been made. At this stage, office staff will inform DSL in school.</li><li>• This will also be recorded on My Concern asap.</li></ul>
<b>Step 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The safeguarding team will consult with each other on risk and the degree of vulnerability of child and family. If the safeguarding team are not reassured the child is safe then a home visit will be conducted.</li><li>• The home visit will be done by 2 members of staff- the decision to do this could be on the same day, after 2 days, but will <b>automatically</b> take place on the 3rd day.</li><li>• Staff conducting the visit will knock on the door and take step back 2 metres from the main door.</li><li>• If no response, staff will post written correspondence through letterbox. Staff will also take their identification badges and knock on the doors of neighbours and ask if they have any knowledge of children's whereabouts.</li><li>• All information will be recorded on My Concern</li></ul>

If the child has not been seen and the parents or carers have not made contact with either, schools must report the child as missing from education.

See also:

Anti-bullying Policy

Child protection Policy

E-Safety Policy

Safeguarding Policy

SEND Policy

Collection and Late collection procedures and policy