

# *Stepgates Community School*



## *Attendance Policy*

## Mission Statement

At Stepgates Community School everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow together, as independent, enthusiastic and confident learners in an inclusive, creative, safe, healthy environment.

This policy is based on our Mission Statement and Aims for our school.

## Introduction

Stepgates Community School, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all children benefit from regular school attendance. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end the school we expect that pupils attend 100% of the time, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

## Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected
- promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- act promptly to address patterns of absence and work with external agencies, to overcome them
- raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality
- ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance
- identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them
- promote and support punctuality in attending school

- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure school attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

### Relationship to other documents, legislation and policies

This policy is based on and aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance including those set out in Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) published with effect from 19 August 2024,

It refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

It also covers responsibilities referred to in:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Equalities Policy
- Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Inclusion Policy

### Parental responsibility and the law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- (a) To his/her age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) To any special needs he/she may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act. Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (Ss 434 and 458) and The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## Expectations

**At Stepgates we expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school daily, 100% of the time
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day

**We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children will:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/ren in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/ren are unable to attend school
- **contact the school on the first day of the child's absence, before 10am, and on each subsequent day of absence**, and advise when they are expected to return
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem that may keep the child away from school occurs
- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Attendance Officer, who can be contacted via the school office or using the email: [office@stepgates.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:office@stepgates.surrey.sch.uk)

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of our school community must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education. In addition to this, the school has the following responsibilities:

**Head Teacher will:**

- Adopt the whole policy
- Implement this policy at school
- Monitor school-level absence data and report it to the Governors
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence
- Appoint Key staff to:
  - liaise and follow-up with Surrey County Council Attendance Advice Officer
- and provide appropriate access to attendance data
- consult and liaise closely with Surrey County Council Attendance Advice Officer on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay
- work in close collaboration with Surrey County Council Attendance Advice Officer during their termly/half termly register analysis
- set whole school attendance targets
- monitor and evaluate attendance with Surrey County Council Attendance Advice Officer
- Have a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

**The designated Senior Attendance Champion' with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is the Home School Link Worker (HSLW) who can be contacted via the school office.**

**The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:**

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Work with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicate with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicate the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

**Office Staff/Attendance Officer will:**

- oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- record all reasons for absences in the register
- liaise with the Surrey Attendance Service as required to reinforce good practice
- share the class teacher's concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the Senior Attendance Champion
- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- transfer calls from parents to the Headteacher or DSL in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- monitor and analyse attendance data.
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff

The attendance officer can be contacted via the school office

**We expect that school staff will:**

- complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the HSLW
- be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the HSLW

- encourage good attendance
- provide a caring and welcoming atmosphere for children, provide a safe learning environment, provide a sympathetic response to any pupil concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school and LA expectations with regard to regular school attendance

**The Governors will be responsible for:**

Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Pupils are expected to attend school every day

### Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

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. The school day begins at 8.40am with the opening of the school doors. Morning registration will take place from 8.45am and the registers will remain open in the office until 9.15am. Any pupil who arrives after the doors are shut at 8.50am and class teachers have taken registers and before the close of registers at 9.15am will need to sign in at the office and they will be marked present but recorded as late. Any pupil arriving after 9.15 am should also sign in at the office and will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration for years R -2 will be taken at 1.00pm

The afternoon registration for years 3, 4 5 and 6 will be taken at 1.10pm

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before 9.15am will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close. Please see Appendix A showing the codes used for attendance.

### Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send a text asking for the reason for absence
- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit and call the police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained - this will be no later than 5 working days after the session for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If there is no improvement in attendance (or the parents are not engaging with the school), the school will issue a Notice to Improve (similar to the Penalty Notice warning letter) and monitor the attendance for 15 school days. If there is insufficient improvement, the school can ask Surrey County Council to consider issuing a penalty notice per parent/carer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate

### Children Missing Education

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority particularly where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day, in conjunction with 'Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' (2016).

Staff are alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- 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
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Support families with attendance issues via the Attendance team
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Notify parents by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

## Severe absence

Particular focus will be given by all staff to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

The school will monitor and target these children and work with these families. The school may also look at the needs of the children for example if they have an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

## Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/orthodontal appointments
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and to ensure child/ren do not miss out on their education during term. We ask parents to take due consideration of these prior to booking a holiday. We expect that pupils attend 100% of the time as per Surrey CC's guidelines, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher.

### Grant for Exceptional Leave of Absence

Parents are not entitled to leave of absence for their child/ren as a right and this will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, e.g. for compassionate reasons, and once the **Headteacher has considered:**

- the child's record of attendance
- *if leave of Absence is granted it shall not exceed five school days in any one year, as agreed by the school's governing body*
- the time of the leave, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important examinations/assessments/school events

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

**Leave of absence, for exceptional circumstances, will not be granted if additional leave is taken either side of this time without previous approval. Proof of flights or other documentation supporting the request must be produced if asked for.**

Any savings that you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.

Where a parent wishes to **request a leave of absence**, a formal request must be made as far in advance as possible, in writing by completing a leave of absence application form, to the Head Teacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Local Advisory Committee.

If a leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Absences during mock SATS and SATS examinations *will not be authorised*.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions - including, but not limited to, those listed below - to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty Notices:

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's

unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

### **Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued**

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024**

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice - Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Notice to improve**

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

The Notice will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence during term time, a specific Penalty Notice warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents/carers have previously been warned through school newsletters; parent mail; or booklets, policies etc. available on the school website, that such absences would not be authorised, and that they would be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if they persisted with any such unauthorised leave of absence.

### **Surrey County Council Attendance Advice Officer**

Surrey Attendance Service (SAS) monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Surrey County Council Attendance Advice Officer will work with school staff and parents/carers to promote good attendance.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could, following prosecution, result in a community order, a fine not exceeding £2500 per parent/carer and/or imprisonment for up to three months.

### **Monthly Attendance Letters**

Monthly letters are automatically produced and sent to all parents whose children are late 4 times or more in a month. Monthly letters will also be sent to all parents whose children have an attendance below 90% and for those with attendance between 91% and 94

### **Rewards**

An attendance certificate is awarded to the class with the best attendance on a weekly basis. Written: Summer 2015. Updated Summer 2024

basis. Certificates are given to pupils with 100% attendance for the term.

## Encouraging and promoting Attendance

Stepgates Community School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If children arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the child's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill. *If you are phoning to inform the school that your child is going to be late, someone is collecting your child or he/she has been absent, you may be asked to identify yourself with a **unique password***
- by publishing and displaying attendance statistics
- by requiring children to regularly record their own attendance and punctuality
- by celebrating good and improved attendance
- by monitoring children's attendance, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary.

## Responding To Non-Attendance

When a child does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10.00am, the school will endeavour to contact them that day by telephone, email or text. If the family are not on the telephone and have not provided an email address a letter will be sent.
- **Three Days Absence:** If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer plus any additional contacts the school has been given. If, by the end of the third day, there has still been no contact made, the school will usually make a welfare check (with written prior notification to parents/carers) or request the Police or childrens services to conduct a welfare check.
- **Six Days Absence:** The school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and any other relevant contacts and on the sixth day of unexplained absence the school will usually make a further welfare check (with written prior notification to parents/carers) or request the Police or childrens services to conduct a welfare check. Procedures in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy will then be followed.
- **Ten Days Absence-** If any pupil is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days a DSL will call the C-SPA consultation line for advice and proceed in accordance with advice received. The Local Authority Inclusion Service will also be notified if appropriate.
- **Twenty Days Absence** - If a child is missing from school for twenty school days, they may be taken off the school roll and it will be necessary to reapply for a school place through Surrey County Council.

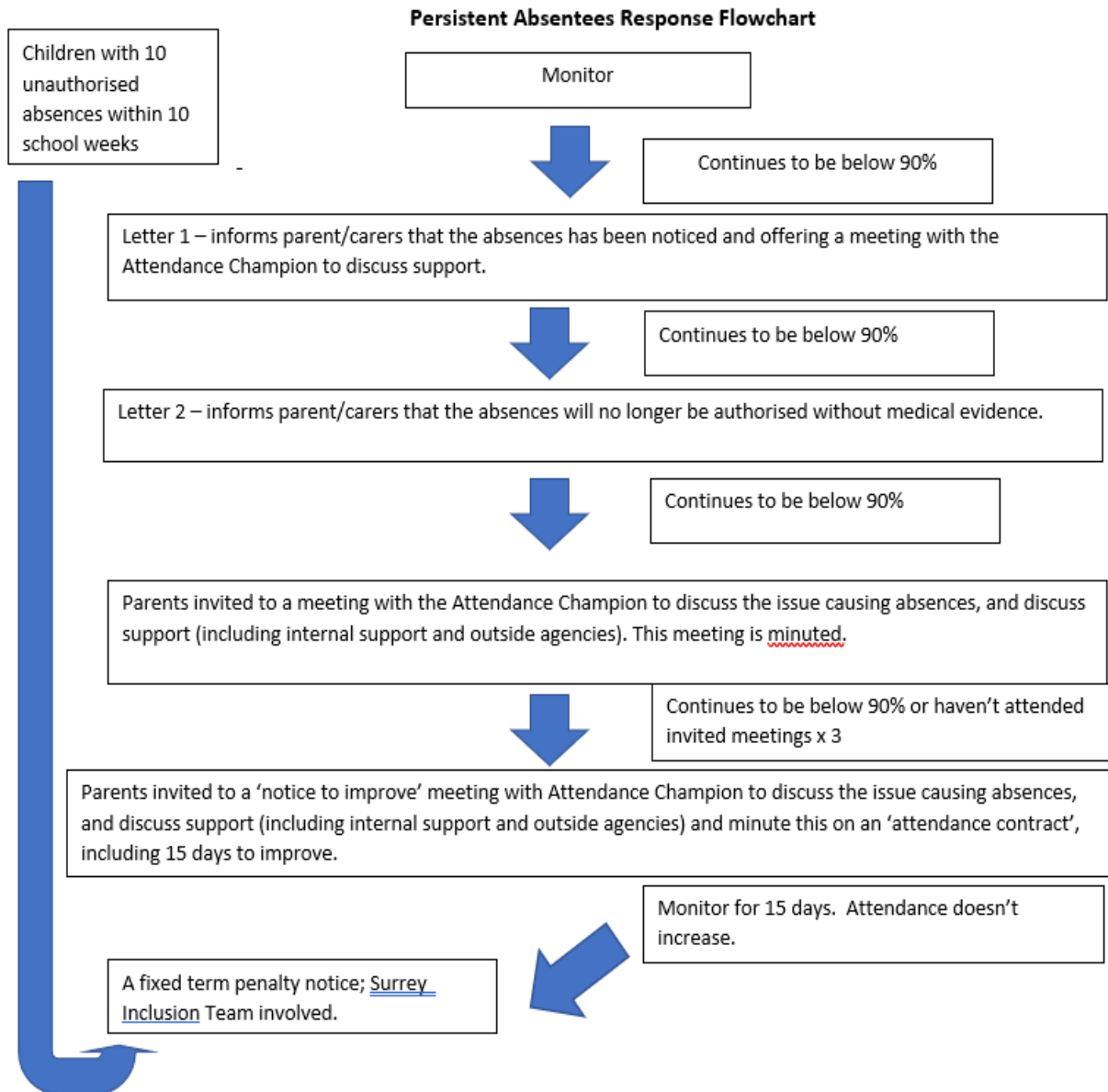
### **Attendance between 90% and 94% and Late arrivals**

The Attendance Officer will analyse data on a monthly basis and send out letters to the parents/carers of children who have been late four or more times over the past month; to the parents/carers of children whose attendance is between 90% and 94%; and to parents/carers of children whose attendance is less than 90%. The letters will both inform and offer support to parent/carers.

Children who arrive late after registers have closed will be coded as unauthorised absence.

### **Persistent Absentees (under 90%)**

Attendance Champion and the Attendance Officer will meet each half term and analyse the previous half term's attendance data. Children whose attendance is less than 90% or/and have had ten unauthorised absences in ten school weeks will be identified during this meeting and the steps below followed.



### Changing Schools

It is important that, if families decide to send the child/ren in their care to a different school, that they inform Stepgates Community School office staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received in writing and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to SAS.

### Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.
- The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare/bench mark attendance data to local, regional and ~~the~~ national levels ~~average~~, to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the Governors.

### Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance,
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

### Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families .

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and to the Governors and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

### Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

We are aware that some pupils may be absent due to complex barriers to attendance, or due to mental or physical health or SEND. We are also aware that some pupils may have lengthy or unavoidable periods of absence.

We work hard with our parent / carer community to put in place strategies and support in place to ensure good attendance, including the following:

- ✓ If the school have not been informed of a child's absence
- ✓ parents will receive a phone call before 10am
- ✓ The school may carry out home door stop visits, make a C-SPA referral and/ or Police Welfare checks if parent uncontactable
- ✓ Attendance letters are generated automatically and sent monthly for:
  - a. Persistent Absentees - PAs- (below 90%) regardless of reasons behind absenteeism,
  - b. 91-94% attendance warning letter
  - c. If there are more than 4 "lates" in a month.
- ✓ The school liaises with other services for support such as Traveller Services/ Refuge / Social Care/ Family Support to provide Early Help.
- ✓ We track where pupils go who leave us (We know where pupils go onto before taking them off roll.)
- ✓ we offer support to parents to discuss any concerns, supporting them through signposting and referrals. Members of the Inclusion Team are on both gates in the morning for parents to arrange a convenient time to talk.
- ✓ Parenting courses are offered to support specific "blockers" for children's attendance e.g. managing your child's anxiety; 4-week parenting course, ASD/ ADHD courses & Emotional Coaching for parents; cooking on- a budget (parent/ parent and child).

- ✓ Bespoke activities for reluctant children are provided with the Inclusion Team / an allocated LSA on entry to school
- ✓ Alternative access arrangements
- ✓ Breakfast provided for those who need it
- ✓ Inclusion Leader can offer specific family support
- ✓ Alarm clocks have been provided for families.
- ✓ Our monthly newsletter highlights online safety considerations for parents and parenting courses (school based and local community)
- ✓ Signage around school
- ✓ Attendance raffle - for children to put into a raffle every day they are in school before registration.
- ✓ 100% attendance certificate termly
- ✓ Weekly celebration in assembly of class attendance
- ✓ Attendance trophy
- ✓ Children with SEMH anxieties receive targeted support at lunch/ break times/ transition times e.g. Chill club, ELSA support.

We have thorough systems in place to ensure high attendance is encouraged and we have procedures and policies in place to manage the absence of children. Off-rolling of children does not take place at our school. Any child that leaves the school outside the normal times is reviewed by the Attendance team and with the local authority, if required.

Where a pupil has an EHCP and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. The policy will be approved by the Governing body.

**Review:** Summer 2025

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: Attendance Codes

Appendix B: Penalty Notice poster showing stages

**APPENDIX A: Attendance Codes**

*All pupils must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark. Registration will be taken by class teachers during morning and afternoon registration.*

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent - leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by

	regulated employment abroad	the school
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent - other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access

		arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent - unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

If you would like an application for leave of absence, please contact the office or download the form from the website.

**Appendix B: Poster showing stages of Penalty Notices****PENALTY NOTICES WILL BE ISSUED FOR**

**Term time leave:** Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days

**10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period:** A Penalty Notice may be considered/issued when a pupil has had 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

**PER PARENT/PER CHILD**

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child.  
For example: 3 Siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

**FIRST OFFENCE**

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a term time holiday or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at:  
£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of issue, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days\*\*.

**SECOND OFFENCE (within 3 years of the First Offence)**

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at:  
£160 if paid within 28 days (no reduced fee for paying early).  
(\*Unpaid Penalty Notice's after 28 days may result in a parental prosecution)

**THIRD OFFENCE (within 3 years of the First Offence)**

On the third time that an offence is committed for either a term time holiday and / or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case may proceed straight to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £2500.