



# Attendance Policy

Last reviewed October 2024  
by Headteacher and Governing Body

## Rationale:

At Stoneygate Nursery School, we recognise how important good attendance is and the positive impact that attending school regularly has on your child's learning and development. We encourage a good level of attendance for all of our pupils by fostering an inclusive, nurturing environment in which our pupils feel safe, comfortable and eager to learn.

We strive to ensure that parents understand just how important it is for their child/ren to attend nursery and will do all we can to work in partnership with our families, and other agencies where necessary, to support and foster good attendance.

The Department for Education (DFE) guidance states that all schools should have effective systems in place to both encourage regular attendance and punctuality and for addressing any cases where poor attendance may arise.

## Aims:

We will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance levels.

## Absence Procedures:

### If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to reception.

### If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- If we continue to fail to make contact with you, we will call the emergency contacts provided by you.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/Back Up DSL will conduct a home visit/welfare check on the third day of absence if we have still not heard from you.

- In circumstances where other agencies are involved with the family, the Headteacher/DSL/Back Up DSL may make contact with other agencies if we have not heard from you, to ensure the safety of the child.
- If required, we will follow our 'child missing in education' procedures.

#### **If your child is sporadically absent we will:**

- Invite you to discuss the situation with senior staff.
- Put actions in place to ensure that attendance improves and barriers to attendance are overcome.

#### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the nursery school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- shopping, looking after other children, birthday celebration or other similar circumstances
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed in advance with the Headteacher
- days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence is authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or similar.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home.

#### **Expectations around Attendance:**

##### **Session Patterns**

At Stoneygate Nursery School, all children are expected to attend nursery for five morning or five afternoon sessions; alternative session arrangements may occasionally be made at the discretion of the Headteacher. Children who are eligible for 30 hours through the Extended Entitlement are expected to attend nursery for the 30 hours. Where children attend

sessions flexibly, parents must note that their child may miss special events planned on days when their child does not attend; in these cases, the nursery is under no obligation to re-allocate nor exchange these additional times for children to attend.

### **Holidays in Term Time/Extended Leave:**

At Stoneygate Nursery School, we discourage the taking of holidays in term time. If parents wish or need to take their child out of nursery during term time, then parents are requested to fill out a holiday request form stating the reasons for the planned absence. The Headteacher will consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.

### **Religious Absence:**

The school will authorise one or two days of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, (i.e. the day set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member) and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as 'C'.

### **Pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons:**

The introduction of new statutory guidance on 1st September 2014 places much more emphasis on the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils; whether their condition is short or long term.

Stoneygate Nursery School will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be as a result of specific practices or resources used within school, or by sourcing more appropriate provision at another establishment.

### **Punctuality:**

Parents are encouraged to bring and collect their children, to and from nursery, on time, every day; handovers will take place between a member of staff and the parent/appropriate adult, at the classroom gate. At Stoneygate, we strive to work with our parents to ensure that punctuality both to and from sessions is effective and where improvements can be made, work in partnership to achieve these.

Arriving to nursery sessions on time not only ensures the safety of all the children, but also avoids disruption to teaching and learning. If your child misses the start of the day they will miss their Key Worker group times, which are essential for their Learning and development. Pupils who arrive late for their session also disrupt the learning of others within their class. A child who is 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year, misses the equivalent of two weeks of nursery school. Equally, collecting a child late from their sessions can have a negative impact on their emotional state and cause unnecessary stress/distress to that child.

### **How we manage punctuality:**

- Registers are marked by 8.45am, 9.15am and 12.45pm and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- Any child arriving after the registers have been closed will receive an 'L' for lateness and the total number of minutes will be recorded.
- Any child who is noted as absent and who we have not received information regarding the circumstances of the absence, will be recorded as "N" until we make the necessary phone calls/contact the parent, to identify the reason for the absence.
- If a child is consistently late the child's teacher will discuss this with the parents/carers to try to find a solution. (Emphasis will be given on the importance of being on time and of the valuable experiences nursery attendance provides by being present throughout the whole session).
- If poor punctuality continues the teacher will inform the Headteacher who will arrange to meet the child's parent/carer and the above discussed in more detail. Solutions and support will be discussed.
- If following a meeting, lateness does not improve, then the Headteacher may feel the need to take a multi-agency approach towards helping improve attendance.
- Ultimately, the Nursery may consider the validity of your child's place should attendance not improve once supportive measures have been implemented.

### Monitoring of Attendance:

The Headteacher will monitor attendance every half term. For children whose attendance is below 85%, a copy of this policy will be sent home from the Headteacher with a covering letter.

### Persistent Absence:

The minimum attendance level which is expected of all primary aged children nationally is 95%. At Stoneygate Nursery School we will seek to achieve at least an attendance level of at least 80% due to the children's age and tendency for parents to keep young children off nursery when they have a slight illness. A pupil becomes a 'Persistent Absentee' when their attendance falls below 80% at any point during the school year; whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. When attendance nears this level, children miss significant amounts of schooling and their educational progress is put at risk. We need parents' full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level.

If, for any reason a child's attendance does fall into this category, then parents will be asked to do all they can improve the situation. We will consider individual circumstances such as illness and medical/ assessment appointments. We ask that parents inform us on the first day of absence and this will be recorded on the register. If we do not hear from parents on the first day of absence we will call them to ask why their child is absent. If we do not receive communication from parents or a valid reason for absence then a home visit will be conducted on the Third day of absence by the DSL / Deputy DSL to conduct a welfare check. Parents will be provided with details of their child's attendance through termly attendance letters, showing the previous terms attendance percentage.

If attendance levels, once addressed, do not show signs of improvement, or the child remains absent for a period of two weeks or more with no given reason, then the nursery will have no option but to view this as a potential safeguarding concern and embark on a multi-agency support approach. If no further improvement is made once support has been put into place, then the child's place may be withdrawn at the discretion of the Headteacher. Withdrawal of a place will be put in writing and sent to the home address. Places cannot be held and will be re-allocated following the nursery school's Admission Policy.

## Rights, Roles and Responsibilities:

### Parents and Carers:

- Ensure the child in their care attends nursery regularly and punctually.
- Ensure that nursery have up to date contact details; at least two emergency contacts who can be contacted in the event of parents being unavailable.
- Inform nursery on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence, providing a reason for the absence.
- If the child is absent for more than 1 day, to inform the nursery of the continued absence and update as to the reason for the absence regularly.
- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school to ensure good attendance e.g. early bedtimes and getting clothes ready the evening before.
- Strive to avoid any leave in term time. If leave is unavoidable or in exceptional circumstance, apply in advance using the request for absence/holiday form.
- Attendance of any arranged meetings in school.
- Participation with parenting contracts and any additional support offered by school or other agencies.

### School Staff:

- Class Teachers/Key Persons will discuss attendance and punctuality with children, parents and carers.
- If a parent or carer doesn't communicate an absence from nursery or it does not seem like a valid reason has been provided, then the DSL/Back Up DSL will conduct a home visit/welfare check on the third day of absence.
- Nursery administrators will contact families on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence if parents/carers have failed to notify the nursery school.
- The Headteacher will inform the child's room leader should a child's attendance fall below 80%.
- The child's room leader/Headteacher will contact parents to discuss attendance if it becomes a concern.
- Nursery school attendance will be monitored through the SIMS attendance programme.
- The Headteacher will report on attendance to governors in the Autumn and Spring term SEC meetings.
- The attendance percentages for each term will be shared with parents.
- The Headteacher will consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision. Where there is ambiguity regarding an absence, the Headteacher will make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process.

### Governors:

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly.
- Authorise the Headteacher (or other designated person) to consider and make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.

- Work with the Headteacher to determine levels of attendance/lateness permissible prior to removing and reallocating nursery school places.