



## **Strathmore School Attendance Policy**

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<b>Author</b>	Headteacher
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## 1. Aims

Strathmore School is 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
- 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

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and 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](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

Strathmore is part of the Auriga Ac Trust. At each local governing body meeting, the Headteacher reports on attendance and the governing body reports any concerns about attendance to the Trust.

### 3.1 The governing board

- The governing board is responsible for:
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school
- 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

### **3.2 The headteacher is the designated leader responsible for attendance and acts as the attendance officer with support from the school leadership team**

- The Headteacher acts as the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and monitors attendance. The Headteacher may delegate appropriate tasks to the school leadership team (SLT). SLT can be contacted via [info@strathmore.org.uk](mailto:info@strathmore.org.uk)

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
- Referral to Local Authority for fixed-penalty notices, where appropriate for term time holiday requests
- 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 and meeting the whole school development outcomes
- Oversight of the Attendance Team who make calls and set meetings with parents and carers to discuss attendance issues
- Overseeing the delivery of targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to the governing body
- Working with Local Authority education welfare officers to reduce persistent absence and identify strategies to improve attendance
- Decision making around authorisation of absence

### **3.2 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 and in their absence, the Higher-Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) undertake this role.

### 3.3 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Manage incoming messages from parents received by text, email and phone messages about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Where parents have failed to let the school know about any absence, admin will phone or email on day 1 and subsequent days until contact is made
- Where contact is not made, we may undertake an unannounced home visit as part of our safeguarding responsibilities
- Possibly make courtesy calls to check in with the family during the absence
- Alert the school leadership team when there is a need to provide them with more detailed information or support on attendance and seek evidence of absence from the family e.g. medical note, travel details

### 3.4 Parents/carers

- Parents/carers are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence by 9.0am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- 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 and not possible please arrange for first thing in the morning or end of school day to minimize disruption to learning
- School may request evidence of appointments and medical evidence for illnesses longer than 5 days e.g. appointment text messages, hospital letters, copy of a prescription and encourage families to produce evidence when they request or report absence of their child
- Write to the Headteacher at least one week in advance to request term time holiday or leave of absence via [info@strathmore.org.uk](mailto:info@strathmore.org.uk)

### 3.5 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time with the support of their parents or carers

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

- Strathmore will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register using a management data system
- We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once after lunch.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by at the below time each school day:

- 8.50am at the Grey Court Campus
- 9.05am at the St Richard Reynolds Catholic College Campus, Russell School Campus and Darell Campus

The register will be kept open until:

- 9.20am at the Grey Court Campus
- 9.30am at the St Richard Reynolds Catholic College Campus (SRR), Russell School Campus and Darell Campus

The register for the afternoon session will be taken at:

- 1.20pm at the Grey Court Campus
- 1.30pm at the SRR Campus, Russell School Campus and Darell Campus

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent or carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.0am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).
- To report an unplanned pupil absence, parents or carers should call the main school number on 020 8948 0047 ext. 101 for St Richard Reynolds, ext. 201 for Russell and ext. 301 for Grey Court and Darell. Alternatively, parents can email [info@strathmore.org.uk](mailto:info@strathmore.org.uk)
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Absences directly before or after a school holiday may not be routinely authorised.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers 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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## 4.3 Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This is done in the same way as reporting an unplanned absence.
- To report a planned pupil absence, parents or carers should call the main school number on 020 8948 0047 ext. 101 for St Richard Reynolds, ext. 201 for Russell and ext. 301 for Grey Court and Darell. Alternatively, parents can email [info@strathmore.org.uk](mailto:info@strathmore.org.uk) However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

### A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Punctuality will be monitored and parents or carers will be notified if there are concerns

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent or carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupils' emergency contacts, the school will continue to call until we make contact.
- If school has serious concerns about the non-contact we may escalate our concern to other services e.g. social care or SPA (single point of access)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Where contact is not made, we may undertake an unannounced home visit as part of our safeguarding responsibilities

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via phone calls and at the Annual Review meeting to let you know how many days of absence your child has had.
- Meetings may be held to support to identify the barriers to your child's full attendance and put in place appropriate support and actions to help improve attendance.
- Regular attendance surgeries led by the Educational Welfare service will be available termly with families who need support

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.
- We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an unplanned event that happens at short notice and is unavoidable.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least one week before the absence by writing to the headteacher.
- The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – School may authorise 1 day of absence for religious

observations that are calendarised in the religious calendar. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body.

- Traveller pupils 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

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

- The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. This could include term-time holidays.
- If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Our children rely on their parents and carers to support them to be at school every day.

Please talk with us if you are experiencing difficulties getting your child to school on time and every day.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

Strathmore monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. We do this by:

- Keeping up to date records of attendance and absence
- Monitoring and analysing these records
- Understanding individual reasons for absence and how we can tailor our support for each individual pupil or cohort



## 7.1 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

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 attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and 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

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to governors and facilitate discussions with families to understand barriers to attendance and work with them to raise it
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 7.4 Reducing 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.

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
- Promote the importance of excellent attendance through newsletters etc.
- Encourage families to work with us and gain advice and guidance from other

professionals who can help with issues at home that impact on excellent attendance

- Promote open and honest discussions with our families to understand and reduce the barriers they face at home that impact on excellent attendance

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

- This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Headteacher.
- At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Safety Policy

**Please note:** These policies can be found on our school website