

THE STANWAY & THOMAS LORD AUDLEY SCHOOLS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| This policy was agreed by the Local Governing Board on: | DRAFT 2019 |
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Statement of intent

The education act 1996 states that all students should attend school regularly and punctually.

The Stanway & Thomas Lord Audley Schools are committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our schools will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are any problems that affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Rights and Responsibilities

The schools expect students to attend school every day and be on time, properly equipped and ready to learn.

The schools will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

The school staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.

The schools will work in partnership with parents and students to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.

The schools will include in reports to parents on achievement their child's attendance at least annually.

Students will attend lessons punctually.

Students can expect to be welcomed back and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.

Students will be listened to and respected.

Students will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in appropriate condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence, stating the expected return date where possible. Students not attending school for more than one day are expected to provide a note on their return.

Where the school does not receive an acceptable reason for a student's absence, it is required to record in the register and on their record the absence as an unauthorised absence.

If attendance problems do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff, Attendance Solutions Essex Ltd (AS) and the Attendance Compliance Team (ACT) if needed.

- The schools have annual attendance targets set by governors. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target.
- Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school every day.
- AS and ACT work with the school and families to promote good attendance.
- ACT carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance.
- The schools will follow the DFE guidelines for children missing from education.

Parents do not have the right to take children on holiday in term time. In EXCEPTIONAL circumstances a parent(s) may request leave of absence by writing to the school outlining the specific circumstances/reason behind their request for leave of absence. The request will be considered carefully taking into consideration the student's attendance record, family circumstances and timing of the request with regard to assessments and examinations. Any request for leave of absence MUST be made in advance.

Leave of absence or holidays taken without permission are recorded as unauthorised absence. The school expects all students to attend school every day that they are required to do so and will use ACT to issue penalty notices for unauthorised term-time holidays of 5 days (10 sessions) or more.

Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

Where a student's attendance falls or is in danger of falling below expectation letters informing parents may be sent. Where this fails to resolve poor attendance, parents will be contacted by phone or invited to a school based meeting where support and advice to improve attendance will be offered. If attendance still does not improve following this meeting, a referral may be made to ACT.

Registration

Type of registration

At The Stanway & Thomas Lord Audley Schools an electronic registration system is used.

Registers are submitted at the end of the registration period and are accessible in case of emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a student's absence will be collated and forwarded to the attendance officer for entering on the SIMS system.

Start & Close of registration

Registration begins at 8.30am and 12.25pm each school day and registers will be closed 30 minutes after these times.

If a student arrives after the register has closed, they should report to student services to be recorded as late.

Students arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

Use of symbols

The following symbols are used in registers:

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Education off site | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/ description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (at another educational establishment) | Not counted in possible attendances |
| E | Exclusion (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical or Dental Appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/ description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work Experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Non-compulsory school age absence | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Student not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to Students | Not counted in possible attendances |

The legal status of registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording students attendance or absence and in the latter if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failure to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a student.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic year.

Staff responsible for processes

A dedicated attendance officer is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

The form tutor is responsible for taking the morning register daily, the class teacher for the afternoon session. The member of staff who takes the register is responsible for submitting it on time.

The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Each student should be called by name when the register is being taken. A student must not be marked as present unless physically seen by the tutor.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then the school will:

Contact by text message will be attempted by the attendance officer.

If no contact is made a telephone call will be made to parents requesting confirmation of absence.

If there is still no response, the absence is unauthorised.

A home visit may be carried out for students where unauthorised/unexplained absences become a concern. If this is the case then this is likely to be carried out by the Attendance Officer or a member of the pastoral team.

Attendance is reviewed every week by the Attendance Officer, Assistant Heads of House/Year and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

A report is produced of every student whose attendance has fallen below expectation in the previous week and this is sent to HOH/Y. Where appropriate, letters, telephone calls, home visits and school-based meetings are implemented to address the issue and AS may support the school in delivering this. If the student's difficulties are not resolved by these methods then a referral may be made to the ACT who will undertake a formal assessment. Where attendance does not improve then parents may be liable to legal action.

If the student is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there may be provision to allow the student to ease back into the school system. In the event of a student returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented if appropriate. The IRP will include all relevant members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the student as possible.

A weekly late report is generated for each HOH/Y or AHOH/Y so that appropriate action can be taken and parents will be contacted if there is a persistent issue.

Where a student is persistently late the school will write to the parent/carer informing them that late arrivals after registers close will be recorded as unauthorised absences. The school will also issue detentions and operate a student reporting system for lateness.

Authorised & unauthorised absence

Examples of when an absence may be recorded as authorised:

- Illness – where the student is too unwell to attend school and where medical advice has been sought
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (with evidence of the appointment)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstance e.g. bereavement
- If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the Headteacher
- Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the student lives beyond statutory walking distance

Examples of when an absence may be recorded as unauthorised are:

- Minor ailments - these can often be treated with over the counter remedies and there is no need to remain absent from school. These include headache, cold symptoms, sore throats, coughs and aches and pains.
- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Missed bus
- Slept late
- No uniform
- Looking after brothers and sisters or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Unapproved holidays

Where attendance becomes a concern it may be necessary for the school, AS or the ACT to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- Appointment cards/letters/surgery stamp in student's planner on relevant day
- Medical certificate
- Letter from GP
- Copy of a prescription/prescribed medicines

Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement, school prospectus and annual report from the Governors.

The school will keep parents informed of their child's attendance through newsletters, parent's evenings and student reports.

Parents, students and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Where it is known that a student has a history of poor attendance prior to being admitted to school, support strategies will be employed prior to admission.

Parents will be informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Students who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

Any issues, which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties, will be promptly investigated by the school (refer to Anti-bullying Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy)

The school Attendance Officer or designated member of SLT will have regular meetings with the Heads of House/Year/ Assistant Heads of House/Year, in order to identify and support those students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

School staff will operate reward systems to recognise students with good attendance.

The school will award certificates to recognise good attendance.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.