**Stokesley Primary Academy – Attendance Policy**

**Principles**

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children.

Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result ‘succeed and thrive’.

We endeavour for children to take responsibility for their own attendance, recognising the link between attendance and good learning.

**Legal Requirements**

The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

* Ascertain the reason
* Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
* Identify whether the absence is authorized or unauthorized.

The Government expects:

Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time.

Schools and local authorities to:

* Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
* Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
* Act early to address patterns of absence

**Promoting Good Attendance**

The school acknowledges that good attendance should be recognised and rewarded.

* Daily Class Attendance – Each class collects £1 to go on their ‘piggy bank’ when all children in their class are present. The children can decide when to cash in their money for a reward.
* Weekly Individual 100% Attendance – each week 2 children from each class with 100% attendance are randomly selected and given a “goodie Friday” Prize.
* Half Termly Assertive Mentoring Meetings and reports to parents will colour code the children depending upon their attendance.
* Half Termly Individual Attendance – at the end of each half school term children will receive a bronze, silver or gold certificate.
* Half Termly Class Attendance – at the end of each half school term each class will be given their class attendance. Under 95% in red, 95% and above in green.
* Yearly Individual Attendance –Those with 100% will also receive recognition.

**Notifying Absences**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/carers should notify the school before 9.15am on the first school day of his/her child’s absence from school. If the reason for absence is sickness and it continues - or is likely to continue - for more than a week, medical evidence should be obtained and submitted to the school.

If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the school office will make contact with the child’s parent/carer. The reason provided will be kept in a log book in the office. In the event that contact could not be made the office will record this in the log book. If there are any child welfare / safety concerns then the matter may be referred to the local authority Access to Education service and/or Social Services.

**Authorised Absences**

Examples of authorised absences are:

* Illness;
* Religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s family belongs;
* Absences allowed by the school. These would usually include:
* medical appointments
* exclusions
* extreme family emergencies/ occasions (bereavements, house fires, close family wedding, etc)

**Unauthorised Absences**

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

* Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
* Truancy
* Unexplained absences
* Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
* Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
* Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school

**Holidays During Term Time**

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to ‘The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.’ Therefore our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstance will only be agreed **very rarely** and therefore holidays will mainly be unauthorised.

Our school will be following the Local Authority guidelines and will be issuing penalty notice fines to parents who remove their children during term time. This is currently £60 per child, per parent.

Parents should apply by letter if they are considering a holiday in term time at least 4 weeks before the holiday is planned. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorised.

**Persistent Absenteeism**

The school will continuously monitor each child’s attendance record. The school follows a three step process for any children who are persistently absent for any reason:

1) The Attendance Officer will review all absences and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 90% in any half-term. In most cases, the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child’s attendance and the school’s concerns.

2) If a child’s attendance level has not improved, or has fallen further, at the end of the next half term, the attendance officer will contact the parent/carer to arrange a meeting. The attendance officer will liaise with the Deputy Head Teacher, class teacher and when necessary other professionals if the need for support is identified.

3) In the event that the child’s attendance levels still do not improve then the school will request that the ESW refer the matter to the local authority access to education team. Action which may then be taken can include court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers.

**Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, this can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect all children to be **in class between 8.45am and 8.55am** at this time. Registers are marked by **8.55am**. Any children arriving after this time **must report to the school office** to be marked in.

At 9.25am the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after this time – for reasons not considered acceptable by the school – they will be recorded as ‘Late after registers closed’. They are marked as being on site but this does not count as a present mark and will show as an **unauthorised absence** and affect their attendance record.

**Persistent Lateness**

The school follows a three step system for children who are persistently late:

1) When a child is considered to be persistently late (this is at the discretion of their class teacher, the school Attendance Officer and/or the Headteacher) then the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child’s persistent lateness and the school’s concerns.

2) If a child continues to be persistently late the school will send a second letter to the parents/carers requesting a meeting to discuss the matter and see if there are any ways in which the school can help.

3) In the event that the child’s punctuality still does not improve then the school will refer the matter to the access to education team for action.

**Collection of children during school hours.**

Please inform the school office if you do need to collect your child during school hours. However, we do ask that you try to make medical (doctors, dentist, optician) appointments outside of the school day. You will need to sign your child out of school stating the reason. This form will be monitored to ensure that children are not missing school on a regular basis.