

# Attendance Policy

Reviewed December 2021



**The Stour Academy Trust**

## **1. Policy Aims**

The Stour Academy Trust is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities for learning presented to them. There is a clear connection between low attendance causing detrimental impact on pupils performance, achievement, friendships and self-esteem.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## **2. Attendance Key Information**

It is a legal obligation to keep an accurate attendance register which identifies all pupils as either:

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

Pupils become of Statutory School Age on the 1st September, 1st January or 1st April after their 5th Birthday. Pupils are no longer of Statutory School Age on the last Friday in June of the Academic Year in which they turn 16 years old.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust on at least a termly basis, through the CEOs termly report. The Board of Directors also maintains responsibility for the adoption of this policy.

### **Headteacher or SLT Attendance Lead**

Responsibilities include:

- Implementation of this policy at school level
- Undertaking the monitoring of school-level absence data and reporting it to Trust leaders



- Holding regular attendance team meetings with all employed individuals with a role in attendance
- Meeting with parents where serious attendance concerns are in place
- Authorising fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Checking accurate coding is being applied
- Overseeing the process for children missing in education

### **Parent Support Advisor / Attendance Officer (if in post)**

Responsibilities include:

- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher or SLT Attendance Lead
- Works with school liaison officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss low level or regular attendance issues
- Advises the Head Teacher or SLT Lead when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Advises Head Teacher or SLT Lead regarding children missing in education

### **Class Teacher**

Responsibilities include:

- Submitting attendance registers on a daily basis in a timely manner
- Undertaking calls in the afternoon to parents of pupils whom did not attend school during that day. This is a supportive call to check on pupil wellbeing not to raise attendance concerns

### **Admin Staff**

Responsibilities include:

- Chasing attendance registers not submitted in a timely manner
- Undertake first day calling responsibilities for any unexplained absences where a parent has not contacted the school first
- Amending absence coding when communication from parents received
- Undertaking calls in the afternoon to parents of pupils whom did not attend school during that day. This is a supportive call to check on pupil wellbeing not to raise attendance concerns

### **Parent / Carer**

Responsibilities include:

- Providing school with an appropriate reason for child(ren)s absences on a daily basis- **Should we not receive communication from you or be able to contact you, we will undertake a home visit.**



## **4. Types of Absence**

### **Unplanned medical absence**

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

This should be evidenced in a copy of the appointment booking.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

It is imperative that all pupils arrived on time to ensure they can take part in lesson input to give them core information for the day of learning ahead. The School day begins at 8.45am

Registration closes at: 9am

Any child who arrives between 9.00-9.30am will be coded as L

Any child who arrives after 9.30am will be coded as U

### **Term time absence**

All absence that is not classed as one of the above will be classed as a term time absence e.g. holiday, family bereavement. These absences will be classed as unauthorised unless granted for exceptional circumstances such as:

- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, but not usually for extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account for the ceremony and travelling time, but not for extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Absences to visit family members are not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives and the school will authorise compassionate leave, up to a maximum of three days.
- Failure by local Authority to provide transport



## **Persistent absences**

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may be a cause for concern and may result in a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer. In some cases the School Liaison Officer may even consider prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

## **Children Missing in Education**

It is important that no child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Stour Academy Trust, Head Teacher of the Academy, School Attendance Officer and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority Guidance will be followed, by complete a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- a) If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to located him/her
- b) The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

## **5. Legal Sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

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. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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.

## **7. Appendices**

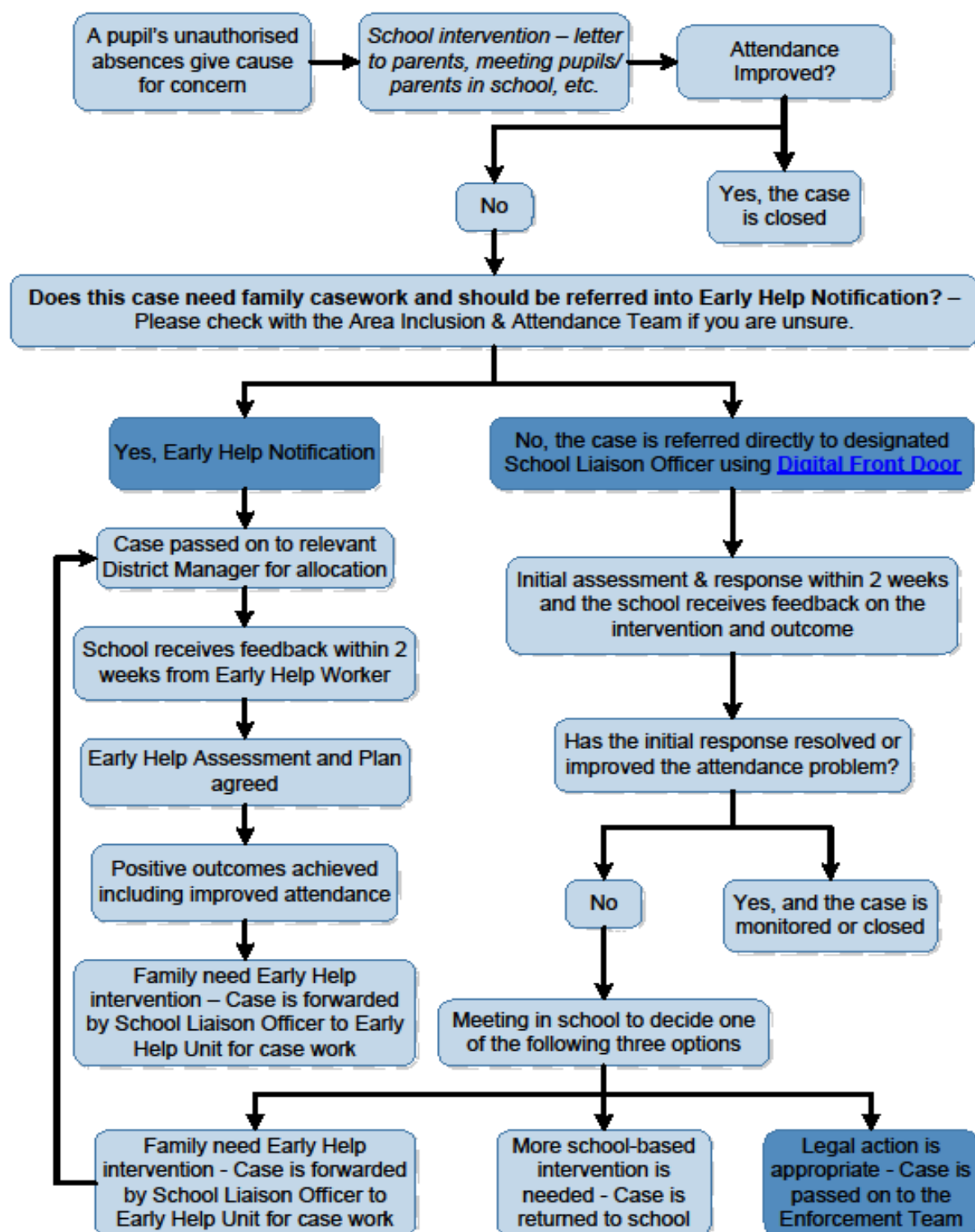
Appendix 1 – Kent school referral pathway

Appendix 2 – Standard coding used to record absences

Appendix 3 – COVID coding used to record absences that's are COVID 19 related



## Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance



## Appendix 2: Standard coding used to record absences

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made





<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed



<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



## Appendix 3: COVID coding used to record absences that's are COVID 19 related

Scenario	Code to use	Reason
Pupils due to attend school who have to self-isolate because they have symptoms, and are waiting for their test results	<b>X</b> or <b>X02</b>	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
<b>Note:</b> use this code only until they get their test results		
Pupils due to attend school who remain unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)	<b>I</b> or <b>I01</b>	They're unwell
Pupils due to attend school who have to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive	<b>I</b> or <b>I02</b>	They're unwell (or have tested positive with no symptoms)
Where you give approval for a pupil to be absent (for example, to attend the funeral of a close relative)	<b>C</b>	They're taking a leave of absence authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances
Pupils who are self-isolating after returning from a non-exempt country or territory	<b>X</b> or <b>X05</b>	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
Pupils who are specifically advised not to attend for public health reasons related to COVID-19, as part of local or national restrictions to schools. For example, if they have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the <b>Omicron</b> variant of COVID-19	<b>X</b> or <b>X07</b>	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
Pupils who are advised not to attend school by the relevant directors of public health, as part of outbreak management	<b>X</b> or <b>X08</b>	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
Pupils who are self-isolating as a close contact of a confirmed case as they're not fully vaccinated and are over 18 years and 6 months	<b>X</b> or <b>X09</b>	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice

