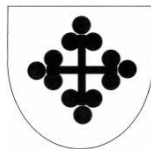


Stone CE Combined School

Attendance policy



Reviewed by	Full Governing Body Meeting
Date	September 2025
To be reviewed	September 2026



Aims

At Stone School we see attendance as central to our school vision:

'Love one another as I have loved you... helping each other to reach for the stars'

This means that we aim for every child to reach their full potential. Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wide life choices. We are committed to developing and maintain our whole school culture and ethos that promotes the benefits of high 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 in attending lessons.

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:

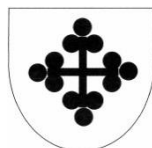
- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#) - which explains the persistent absence threshold.

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

From September 2024, there is a national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within a 10 school-week period, after which a penalty notice must be considered by the school. The new rule mean it is no longer possible to take a child out of school for a week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.



Our Expectations

All members of our school community must strive to create a culture in which pupils come to school daily, to enjoy schooling and leave with a sense of achievement.

Our minimum expectations are:

Attendance is 96.5%

Punctuality is 96.5%

Roles and responsibilities

Improving attendance is everyone's role. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils, including their safeguarding and welfare. Good attendance begins with our school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn. All staff will promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers and will work collaboratively with pupils and parents/carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

The governing board

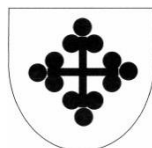
The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data **on at least a termly basis**
- 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
- Training on attendance is included in the school(s)' continued professional development offer for all staff, and that attendance is covered in any induction packs.

The headteacher

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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Ensuring attendance training and the importance of good attendance is shared with all staff during induction and throughout professional development during the year.



- Ensuring dedicated attendance training is provided to any staff with a specified attendance function in their role.

The attendance lead

The attendance lead – Mrs R Strudwick - is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level (see section 7)
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Working with Pastoral Lead to improve attendance
- Working with County Attendance Team to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Pastoral Lead

The pastoral lead is responsible for:

- Submitting referrals to county attendance team as directed by the Attendance Lead
- Meeting with parents to discuss attendance issues as directed by the Attendance Lead
- Working with the County Attendance Team to tackle persistent absence
- Each half term monitor and address concerns regarding regular lateness with parents (L codes)

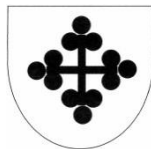
Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School admin/office staff

School administration staff are expected to:

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.



- Identify any unexplained absences for each session and contact parents (and social worker if involved) to understand why and when the pupil will return and follow up unexplained absence as per section 4.5
- Ensure that correct codes are used.
- Providing regular attendance reports and reporting concerns about attendance to the attendance lead and the headteacher
- Submit term-time absence requests to HT and send response letter to parents (see Appendix 2). Monitor if the absence is taken and follow the procedure set out in Appendix 4.

DSLs – Designated Safeguarding Leads

DSLs will:

- Discuss and analyse attendance as part of weekly safeguarding meetings
- Liaise with agencies where necessary
- Liaise with social care as necessary (if the child has an allocated social worker)
- Carry out a home visit (after dynamic risk assessment) to establish the whereabouts of any child who is unaccounted for
- Report a missing child to the police if a child is still unaccounted for despite attempting all contacts and home visit

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

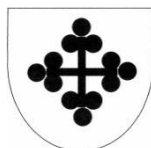
Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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

See Appendix 1 for attendance codes.

We will also record:

- 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open for 30 minutes, closing at 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open for 15 minutes, closing at 1.15pm.

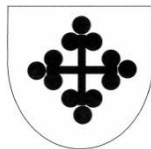
Authorised and unauthorised absence

What should I do if my child is unwell?

If your child is experiencing mild symptoms such as a snotty nose, headache, feeling tired or hayfever, please send them into school. These are not valid reasons to miss an entire day of education; children can access our medical team at any point, and if it is felt that they need to be sent home, we will contact parents/carers.

If your child has been sick/has diarrhea, has an injury or is genuinely unwell and not able to attend school, please ensure that you contact the school by 9am on the first day of illness and on each individual day of the absence. This can be either by e-mail stoneadmin@stone.bucks.sch.uk or by telephone (01296748340 – option 1)

Where a pupil is absent due to illness for a prolonged period, or where there are concerns about a pattern of repeated absence, the school may, following discussion with parents, request medical evidence to support the reason for absence. This may include, for example, an appointment card, prescription, letter from a professional or other appropriate documentation.



In most cases, a parent/carer's explanation will be accepted. Medical evidence will only be requested where there is reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or where it is necessary to ensure that appropriate support and safeguarding arrangements are in place.

The school will take a proportionate and supportive approach, working in partnership with families and, where appropriate, other professionals to ensure the pupil's needs are understood and barriers to attendance are addressed.

If the school is unable to validate 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 can be done in one of two ways:

1. Emailing the school - stoneadmin@stone.bucks.sch.uk
2. Send a note via your child and the class teacher

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 and you will be asked to provide evidence of appointments where possible

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

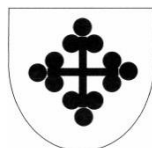
Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- Contact the parent/carer on a daily basis if we are not informed as to why they are absent at the start of each day to ensure that proper safeguarding action is taken if required
- If we are unable to contact a parent, the additional/emergency contacts provided will be used to contact parents to notify them of their child's absence and to receive an explanation. We expect all children to have at least two emergency contacts
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may do any or all of the following:

Within First 5 Days

- Send emails to all known email addresses
- Check with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with
- Check with the pupil's friends
- Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family
- Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll



- Conduct a home visit if we have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.
- Police and/or social services may be contacted

Within days 5-10

- Write to address of emergency contact (if known)
- Speak to the County School Attendance Officer for advice:
countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Inform the parent/carer of the child in writing that we are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to the Children Missing Education Team may be required if no response is provided
- Repeat a home visit if we have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.

> Day 10

- Complete online Child Missing in Education referral form /contact CME Officer: [Refer a child not receiving a formal education to us | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

In the event that absence from school raises a potential safeguarding risk and/or where there are immediate concerns for a child's welfare, we will make an immediate referral to social care or the police.

Reporting to parents/carers

We report children's attendance record annually to parents/carers as part of the end-of-year report. Parents/carers may be notified of their child's attendance at any point should it be cause for concern.

Approval for term-time absence

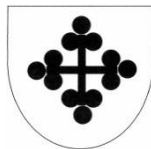
The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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
- Illness and medical/dental appointments

Example of unsatisfactory reasons for absence include but are not limited to:



- A pupil/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform and/or shoes
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school
- Illness where the child is considered well enough for school
- Holidays taken without authorisation of school
- Parent/sibling's non-critical illness
- Looking after the house or family members
- Day trips
- Unwell pets

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four school weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (before 9.15am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (after 9.15am) be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Following internal monitoring where a pupil is identified as persistently late (5 or more late arrivals in a 5-week period), communication will be made with the parent/carer to discuss barriers to attending school on time. This will then be monitored for a further 3-week period. If attendance has not improved then we will contact the County Attendance Team.

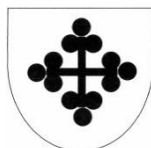
Penalty Notice/Legal sanctions (See Appendix 4: Term-time leave of absence flowchart)

National Thresholds

From September 2024, schools will need to consider a Penalty Notice if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The 10-week period would start on the first day of unauthorised absence. Half of a day (am or pm) is considered as a 'session'. The threshold of 10 sessions can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, for example, eight sessions of unauthorised holidays in term time and two sessions for other unauthorised reasons. The ten school week period may span different terms or school years, for example: 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 in the Autumn term.

Penalty Notices/ Legal Sanctions

Under the new national framework, a penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least 10 sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term in a period of ten school weeks. Penalty Notices (fines) charged to parents is £80 (if paid within 21 days)



or £160 (if paid within between 22 and 28 days). Where a penalty notice is unpaid, legal action would be pursued. Under the new framework, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child, the charge will be £160.

Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the County Attendance Team under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the County Attendance Team.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Daily monitoring of registers and contact parents/carers
- Communications with parents regarding importance of school attendance
- Education on importance of attendance
- Attendance Ted – a teddy bear who visits the class with the highest percentage attendance each week
- Attendance display – highlighting a class' attendance rate for each week
- Individual attendance data shared at parents' evenings twice per year and on end of year reports. Where attendance is below 95% this is discussed by class teachers

Attendance Monitoring

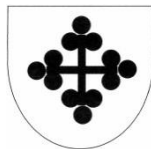
The school will maintain robust systems to monitor attendance at whole-school, group and individual pupil level.

This will include:

- Monitoring attendance and absence **weekly**, with formal analysis conducted **half-termly, termly and annually**
- Tracking individual pupil attendance to identify early signs of concern
- Sharing attendance data with the Local Authority and other agencies where attendance raises safeguarding or welfare concerns
- Providing **fortnightly attendance reports** from the Attendance Officer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Headteacher) to inform timely decision-making and provide early intervention.
- Maintaining accurate records of attendance concerns, actions and interventions, which may be shared with external agencies where appropriate
- Using attendance thresholds to trigger early intervention:
 - **95%** – attendance monitored and reviewed
 - **90%** – identified as persistent absence risk and targeted support initiated

Where attendance falls below expected levels, the school will implement a graduated response:

- Initial communication with parents/carers, including a monitoring period (typically 5 weeks)
- Follow-up communication where there is limited improvement
- Invitation to a **support meeting** to agree an Attendance Contract and targeted actions
- Continued monitoring and review against agreed targets



- Escalation to an **Attendance Contract Meeting (ACM)** with Local Authority involvement where appropriate
- Referral to the County Attendance Team where there is insufficient improvement or engagement

Persistent absence is defined as **90% or below**, and severe absence as **50% or below**.

Attendance Analysis

The school will use attendance data strategically to identify patterns, inform intervention and improve outcomes.

This will include:

- Regular analysis of attendance and absence data to identify:
 - Individual pupils requiring additional support
 - Groups at greater risk of underachievement (e.g. disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils with social worker, young carers)
- Reviewing historic and emerging patterns of attendance to inform targeted strategies
- Using pupil-level data to trigger appropriate interventions, in line with the school's escalation procedures
- Identifying trends across cohorts, year groups and vulnerable groups to inform whole-school improvement planning
- Comparing school attendance data against national and local authority benchmarks
- Reporting attendance data and analysis to the governing board to ensure accountability

Attendance data is collected and published termly through the DfE's national statistics. The school uses this data to evaluate performance and refine its attendance strategy.

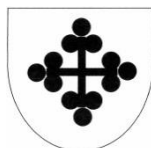
All information is processed and shared in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Children can fall into the persistently absent category for many varied reasons. Investigating what these are and addressing them as soon as possible is an important part of our attendance policy

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- We may use some of the following early intervention strategies:
 - Meetings with parents and child when concerns first emerge to discuss concerns and agree actions to improve attendance
 - Documented conversations with parents and child which agree actions
 - Referrals to external professional
 - Closer monitoring
 - Communicating with parents with agreed plans to improve attendance
 - In more complex and longer-term cases of poor attendance and persistence absence, interventions may include:
 - Multi-agency meetings and action plans
 - Requesting medical information or information from other services



- Use of local authority enforcement processes and procedures
- Home visits
- Direct work with children and parents to address root causes of absence
- Engaging specialist
- Consideration for an education, health and care plan
- Considering options for an alternative form of educational provision

Poor attendance and unexplained absence may be indicators of safeguarding concerns and will be treated as such.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long-term physical or mental health conditions or who have special education needs and disabilities (SEND). All children have the same right to an education and therefore the attendance ambition for all pupils at Stone is the same; however, we recognise that additional support may need to be provided.

If parents/carers would like support with their child's attendance, they should email Mrs R Seivwright to organise a support meeting: inclusionmanager@stone.bucks.sch.uk

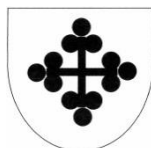
Monitoring arrangements

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

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

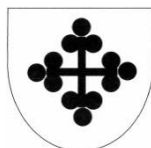
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



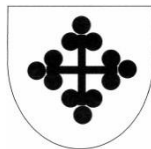
Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
I	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



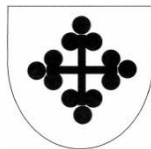
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)



O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2



The John Colet Liaison Group

Local Schools Working In Partnership for mutual benefit

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

(This must be submitted at least four school weeks before the proposed absence)

I request permission from the School's Governing Board for my child

Name:	Class:
-------	--------

To be granted Leave of Absence for the dates below:

From:	To:
-------	-----

The reason for the request is (please complete the appropriate section):

☐ **Funeral of a close relative (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt/uncle, great grandparent) or dependent**

Please give details

☐ **Exceptional Circumstances**

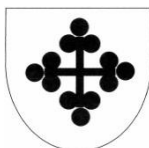
Please give details/attach supporting evidence as to why it is an exceptional circumstance

☐ **Holiday is due to unavoidable parental work/military commitments**

Please provide a supporting letter from employer or an assignment order

I can confirm that the information that I have given above is correct and has no factual omissions. I understand that any authorised absence may be unauthorised at a later date if it is found that I provided inaccurate information; this may jeopardise any future Leave of Absence requests.

Signature of parent/carer:	Date:
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The John Colet Liaison Group

Local Schools Working In Partnership for mutual benefit

STONE CE COMBINED SCHOOL
APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST
RESPONSE FORM

Name:	Class:
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To be granted Leave of Absence for the dates below:

From:	To:
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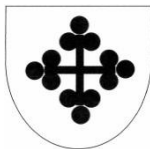
☐ **This absence request has been accepted**

OR

☐ **This absence has been refused because:**

- ☐ Absence is at the beginning of a school term
- ☐ Your child has already had one leave of absence request this school year
- ☐ The request covers all/part of an internal/external assessment period
- ☐ Insufficient notice has been given (four school weeks)
- ☐ Attendance is less than 95%
- ☐ There are lateness issues
- ☐ Your child has unauthorised absences on their record
- ☐ The reason is not exceptional
- ☐ Insufficient reasons provided for the absence request
- ☐ The holiday is not due to unavoidable parental work commitments or no supporting evidence was provided

Signed:	Date:
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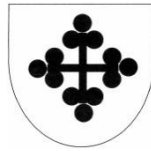


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For office use only:

Current academic year attendance:	Previous academic year attendance:

Appendix 3



Stone School Attendance Monitoring Procedure

