



Stowmarket Attendance Policy (2021) (incorporating the Gipping Valley Pyramid Attendance Policy)

This policy is reviewed annually in April

Issue No	Author/Owner	Date Written	Approved by Governors on	Comments
1	Alistair Ewan	April 2015		New Policy
2	Claire Ferguson	Mar 2017	20 th November 2017	Amalgamating GV Pyramid policy
3	Claire Ferguson	Mar 2018		Added CME information
4	Claire Ferguson	Apr 2019		Annual update
5	Claire Ferguson	Apr 2020	4 th May 2020	Annual update No changes made
6	A McLellan	Apr 2021	17 th May 2021	Annual update KCSIE version updated

This policy has been reviewed and adoption approved by the School Committee.

Signed Date:

This policy has been reviewed and adoption approved by the Headteacher.

Signed Date:

Stowmarket Attendance Policy

We know that parents are committed to supporting their children's education and make every effort for their children to attend school most of the time.

Regular attendance at school is vital if a student is to make satisfactory progress and is to achieve the academic grades required. Parents are required by law to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Students who miss lessons unnecessarily can cause a great deal of disruption for themselves, staff and fellow students.

Figures show that 90% of persistent non-attendees fail to achieve 5 or more good grades at GCSE and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all. Employers want to recruit people who are reliable and have attended school regularly. Every day that a child misses school is a missed opportunity. For example, if a child only attends school for 90% of the school year, they are missing the equivalent of four weeks a year or half a year out of the five they spend in secondary education. For this reason, our schools take the non-attendance of children very seriously.

The Department for Education guidance on School Attendance has been revised. Schools are required to ensure that pupils attend school unless:

- they are ill or have a medical appointment
- the school is closed (e.g. due to bad weather)
- the school transport service is not running
or
- the day is a religious festival for that family

Any other occasion for absence **must be** an exceptional circumstance. If parents wish to take a family holiday during term time, due to work commitments, this is **not** considered to be an exceptional circumstance. It is highly unlikely that we will authorise a holiday in term time. Our general principle is that if an event could have been organised in a school holiday, then it will not be authorised in term time. This includes some family weddings, reunions and visits from relatives.

There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time.

Leave of Absences during term time

We are not permitted to and will not authorise leave of absence during term time except for exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include such occasions as family bereavement or participation at a high level in a representative activity. The exceptional circumstances must be made clear on the Leave of Absence (see Appendices) form which must be approved in advance for the absence to be authorised. A Leave of Absence form is available from the school office and website and must be completed before any absence from school, for any reason other than illness. All local schools will use the same form.

Parents will be fined by means of Penalty Notices or Prosecutions in the Magistrates Courts by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Poor levels of attendance will lead to involvement from the local authority and may lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice by the County Council after referral from the school. School will not

refer if it is satisfied that the absence is unavoidable and that every effort is made by parents to ensure maximum attendance.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Authorised Absence

Schools can authorise any absence. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school has agreed on a satisfactory explanation.

Family Holidays During Term Time/ Leave Of Absence Requests

Schools are now encouraged not to allow **any** absence of leave unless in exceptional circumstances. We will not authorise family holidays as a matter of course. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to 'Family Holidays' and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. Stowmarket High School will only consider authorising holiday leave in the following circumstances:

- for armed service personnel (Army, Navy, RAF) whose specific tours and duties prevent them from taking holidays during term-time
- for emergency services personnel (Fire, Police, Ambulance, Coastguard) who are unable to take leave at any other time due to a national event or a period of national significance
- for a family which needs to spend time together during or after a significant emotional crisis (this should be supported by at least one external agency).

Categories Of Authorised Absence

Illness, medical and dental appointments - where the school believes that a child is genuinely unwell the absence will be authorised. When attending a medical or dental appointment it is important that such appointments be made outside school hours unless in extreme, unavoidable cases. Your child must return after or before such appointments to obtain a present mark for that session. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school may request that parents provide proof that the child is unfit for school. Please note that it is the parents' responsibility to provide such evidence and that a school is not able to speak to doctors about this and will not do so. Occasionally we may be able to do so but only with permission from parents/carers.

Days of religious observance - The school will be sensitive to such requests and parents are encouraged to give notice in advance for leave of absence. Where necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Traveller child when the family is travelling - A number of different groups are covered by the generic term traveller – Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Traveller families can be known to be travel for occupational purposes and can have this agreed with the school. To help ensure continuity of education for traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to

register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

Weddings – School will authorise time for a child to attend the wedding of an immediate family member, such as a parent or sibling as follows: In Suffolk one day; outside Suffolk **up to** three days to include travel to the wedding day and travel from home.

Family bereavements – The school will respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have the discretion to authorise such absences. We will authorise absence for close family members i.e. parent, sibling, grandparent.

Public performances, including film or TV work - The Local Authority must licence a student to take part in a public performance. The school will only authorise absence where participation has been agreed.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy
- absences which have not been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after registration has closed) 9.15am
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

Please note the above list is not exhaustive

Where the unauthorised absence appears to be a problem with a particular student, or deemed to be a concern the school will:

- contact parents to alert them to concerns regarding the attendance of a student;
- request support from the Education Welfare Service.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a “persistent absentee” when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child’s education and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will seek to take action.

Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice might be used where a pupil has **seven** or more unauthorised absences in one school year.

The school will refer a family to Suffolk County Council if a child has **seven** or more unauthorised absences. Each half day is one absence. Parents and carers will be issued with a Penalty Notice when a referral is made.

- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days and within 28 days
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days the Local Authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance
- Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/carer for each child.

A parent is classed as any person who normally cares for the child. For example, if a family has three children and two parents, this will result in a fine of £360, if all students have six or more unauthorised absences.

The money from a fine is paid to the Department for Education, once Suffolk has taken out the cost of issuing it.

Unauthorised absences stay on a child’s school record.

Children Missing Education (CME)

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by the Local Authority (LA), and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Why children miss education

The most common reasons for children missing education include the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of education provision
- Families moving into a new area

Roles and responsibilities

Our school will enter pupils on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified that the pupil will attend the school. In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.

The school will agree with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed ten school days or more without permission.

This policy complies with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2018
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2020
- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2016)
- The Academy Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2014

Office Use
Only

Code :

APPENDICES



Request for / Notification of Intended Absence

Please read before completing this form:

Due to the huge importance that school attendance can make to a child's future, taking time out of school is rarely authorised. However, if you do intend to do so, it is very important that this form is completed and handed in to school well in advance. This will:

- avoid school staff spending valuable time trying to contact you
- avoid us being concerned that your child may have gone missing

We are not permitted to and will not authorise leave of absence during term time except for exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include such occasions as a family bereavement or participation at a high level representative activity. We will not authorise family holidays as a matter of course. Under no circumstances will authorisation be given during, or in the two weeks before an examination period.

Please note: Parents are required to give clear reasons for all absences, which the school is required to record. If a child accumulates 7 or more unauthorised absences, the Education Welfare Department will be contacted and you will receive a fine (£60 per child, per adult with responsibility). You may also:

1. Receive a letter explaining that your child's attendance is now being monitored, or
2. Be required to attend a meeting

Completing the form:

Section A – this section **MUST** be completed for all students.

Section B – this section is only required if you feel you have an **exceptional** circumstance and are requesting that the time taken is authorised.

(A) Student Details: Please Print

Name of student (s):	Class:	Teacher:

The period of absence will be from: ___/___/___ until ___/___/___ inclusive (*inset dates*)

This absence will be in order to: (*please circle below*)

- Take a holiday
- Visit relatives
- Other (please explain below)

Name of parent / carer (please print): Mr / Miss / Mrs / Ms

Signature:.....

Date:.....

(B) Requesting Permission:

Any decision will be made after consideration of the strict criteria for authorising term time absence, the impact it will have upon the student(s) education, reasons given **and previous levels of attendance.**

Reason:

- () The school will authorise this leave of absence
- () The school is not allowed to authorise this leave of absence as it does not meet the exceptional circumstances stated in the schools attendance policy.

This absence will / will not trigger a Penalty Notice Referral being made (at the time the absence takes place)

Signed:..... (Lead Attendance Officer)

Date:.....

GUIDE FOR PARENTS



When does my child need to be at school?

Your child should arrive in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.50am and the afternoon register at 2.10pm (during p5). A warning bell sounds five minutes before these times to tell students that it is time to go registration.

What happens if my child is late?

Registration starts at 8.50am and finishes at 9.10am. If your child arrives between 8.50am and 9.10am for the morning session, he/she will be marked late by the tutor.

If your child arrives after 9.10am for the morning session, your child should sign in at the Attendance Office and he/she will be marked as a late.

If your child arrives after 9.15am he/she will be marked as absent, unless the school transport has caused delay and the school has been informed of this. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. For the afternoon session, this time will be 2.20pm.

If your child arrives after the register has been called for the afternoon session, he/she will be marked late by the teacher.

All students that arrive after registration time should report to the Attendance Office, and fill in the 'signing in' log. If a student is late on two or more occasions in one week he/she will be dealt with by their tutor and/or Head of Year.

Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a telephone call do?

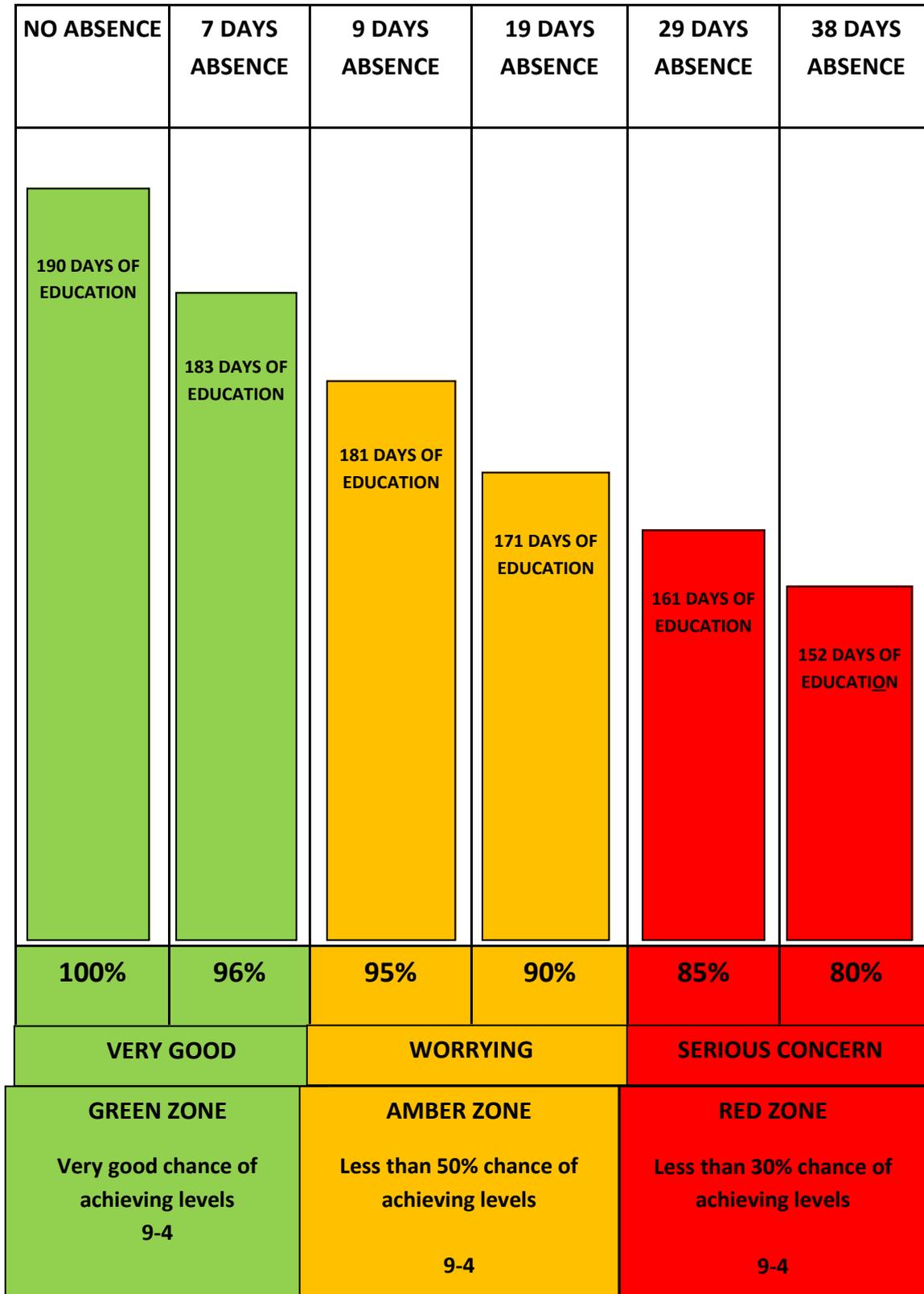
We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school on the first day of absence preferably by 9.30am (absence line 01449 776487). If you do not telephone us, we will telephone you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

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, preferably in writing.



A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days.

That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.



GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

ATTENDING REGULARLY AND ON TIME

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Stowmarket High School.

It will help you to:

**Keep up with your school work and get the best results you can.
Get a job – employers like people who are reliable and on time.**

You should arrive at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.50am and the afternoon register at 2.10pm. A warning bell sounds five minutes before these times to tell you that it is time to go to registration, all students that arrive after 8.50am will be marked as late, after 9.15am or 2.20pm this will become an unauthorised late (meaning your parents/carers will need to provide an explanation).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE LATE

If you arrive during registration, you should go to your tutor room where you will be marked late. If you arrive after registration, you should report to the Attendance Office to sign in. The Attendance Office is located by Student Services.

All students must sign in or out if coming in to school late or leaving school for any reason.

NEED HELP?

Are you having problems with your school work?

Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time?

Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that not attending school is the answer.

It is not – it may even make things worse.

TALK TO SOMEONE

Your form tutor, another member of staff, your parents/carers. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.