



Attendance and Absence Policy

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Statement of intent

St Stephen's Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

St Stephen's Primary School's attendance can be contacted by phoning 01274 731698, or emailing office@ststephens.bradford.sch.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance leaders in the first instance for queries or concerns about attendance.

Miss Loughlin (Deputy Head and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead), Mrs Fillan (Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Miss Scarfe (Family Welfare Champion and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) are our school's Attendance Leaders.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviours Policy
- SEND Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across St Stephen's Primary School.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through St Stephen's Primary School's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the Leadership Team to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in St Stephen's Primary School's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across St Stephen's Primary School.
- Appointing a member of the Leadership Team to the attendance lead role.

- Ensuring all parents are aware of St Stephen's Primary School's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during St Stephen's Primary School day.

The Attendance Leader is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Working with the Attendance Officer to monitor attendance on a weekly basis and agree appropriate follow-up actions.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing St Stephen's Primary School with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating St Stephen's Primary School if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.

- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed (9:00am)
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for illness for which St Stephen's Primary School has granted leave, maximum of 2 days unless medical proof is provided.
- Absence will not be authorised if attendance is below 90%, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as a diagnosed medical condition
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which St Stephen's Primary School has granted leave, when proof of appointment is provided
- Religious or cultural observances for which St Stephen's Primary School has granted leave, maximum of 3 days
- An absence due to a family emergency, maximum of 3 days

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during St Stephen's Primary School day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to bad or cold weather
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason (attendance is 90% or below)

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

St Stephen's Primary School has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils are expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

St Stephen's Primary School day starts at 8:45am, when the school doors open. Pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. Doors close at 8:55am, after which time pupils arriving must sign in at the offices, and will be marked 'late'.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout St Stephen's Primary School day:

- The morning register will be marked at 8:55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:00am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- Pupils who arrive after 9:30am are marked as unauthorised absence for the morning unless they have been at an appointment, for which proof will be required.
- The afternoon register will be marked at 12:45pm (Reception, Y1-4) and 1pm (Y5, Y6). Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close 30 minutes after these times. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

Parents will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents are expected to contact St Stephen's Primary School office via telephone before 8:45am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where there is concern over a child's attendance, parents will be informed of child's current attendance percentage.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted St Stephen's Primary School by 8:45am to report the absence, administrative staff and/or the attendance team will contact the parent by text and telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school, but usually by 9:30.

St Stephen's Primary School will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- To inform parents of their child's current attendance percentage
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto St Stephen's Primary School census system.

St Stephen's Primary School will always request evidence of medical appointments or

procedures when these are given as reasons for absence.

In the case of Persistent Absence (more than 10%), arrangements will be made for parents to speak to a member of the attendance team or member of leadership. The school will inform the LA, on a half termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent(s).

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, St Stephen's Primary School may remove the pupil from the admissions register if St Stephen's Primary School and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Please see the Appendix for further information about absence procedures.

6. Attendance register

St Stephen's Primary School uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.

St Stephen's Primary School will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday

- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When St Stephen's Primary School has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because St Stephen's Primary School has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, St Stephen's Primary School will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

St Stephen's Primary School will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional

circumstances, a maximum of 5 days may be granted in these circumstances. Holidays are not classed as exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, St Stephen's Primary School will expect parents to complete a Leave of Absence form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence and return to school date, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. St Stephen's Primary School will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave are unlikely to be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in a penalty notice (see appendix). St Stephen's Primary School cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by St Stephen's Primary School in advance will be marked as unauthorised and penalty notices will be processed.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment. Children should attend school before and after the appointment unless the appointment is before the start of the school day.

Performances and activities, including paid work

St Stephen's Primary School will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises St Stephen's Primary School's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by St Stephen's Primary School for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not

fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from St Stephen's Primary School. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance, but St Stephen's School acknowledges that this is not always possible due to how some religious dates are decided.

St Stephen's Primary School will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. St Stephen's Primary School will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. A maximum of 3 days will be authorised.

St Stephen's Primary School may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

St Stephen's Primary School recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, St Stephen's Primary School will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. St Stephen's Primary School will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where St Stephen's Primary School has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, St Stephen's Primary School will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from St Stephen's Primary School for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

St Stephen's Primary School will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, St Stephen's Primary School will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.

- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from St Stephen's Primary School premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and if appropriate will invite the parent into St Stephen's Primary School for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on St Stephen's Primary School premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent of their decision within one week of the request.

Pupils will leave St Stephen's Primary School premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunchtime.

Parents will be required to meet their child at their building's office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the InVentry system. A member of staff will be available the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a yearly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which St Stephen's Primary School has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:45 and 12:45pm, (1:00 in Y5-6) where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave St Stephen's Primary School during the day must sign out at St Stephen's Primary School office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If

truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave St Stephen's Primary School premises during St Stephen's Primary School day unless they have permission from St Stephen's Primary School. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of St Stephen's Primary School premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The Orchard and Digital Den
 - St Stephen's Primary School grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of St Stephen's Primary School premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- St Stephen's Primary School will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will record the incident on CPOMS, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be

reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure St Stephen's Primary School has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer, supported by the Leadership Team, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Discussing barriers to attendance with parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices if appropriate.

St Stephen's Primary School will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

St Stephen's Primary School will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. St Stephen's Primary School will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

St Stephen's Primary School will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure St Stephen's Primary School has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

St Stephen's Primary School will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. St Stephen's Primary School will inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality on a half-termly basis, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have

for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. St Stephen's Primary School will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of St Stephen's Primary School's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

St Stephen's Primary School will monitor attendance on a daily and weekly basis and use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Meeting with pupils and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

St Stephen's Primary School will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 10 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, St Stephen's Primary School will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with St Stephen's Primary School's duty of care. St Stephen's Primary School will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. Penalty notices and legal intervention

St Stephen's Primary School will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a meeting with parents and a member of the school's Attendance Team.
- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the Headteacher.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

If parents/carers fail to attend a meeting with the Headteacher or LA, then they will be written to informing them that their child's attendance must improve to 100% over the following 4 week period otherwise they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Letters to parents at Stage 2 or Stage 3 (see Appendix A) will be posted to the home address or in certain circumstances hand delivered by school staff to the parents/carers.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data on a daily and weekly basis to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. Attendance data is recorded so that any decline or improvement can be identified quickly, and appropriate support or interventions put into place.

St Stephen's Primary School will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- St Stephen's Primary School cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across St Stephen's Primary School to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the Leadership Team in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

St Stephen's Primary School will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

17. Training of staff

St Stephen's Primary School will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- St Stephen's Primary School's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- St Stephen's Primary School's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission

register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. St Stephen's Primary School's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is December 2026.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

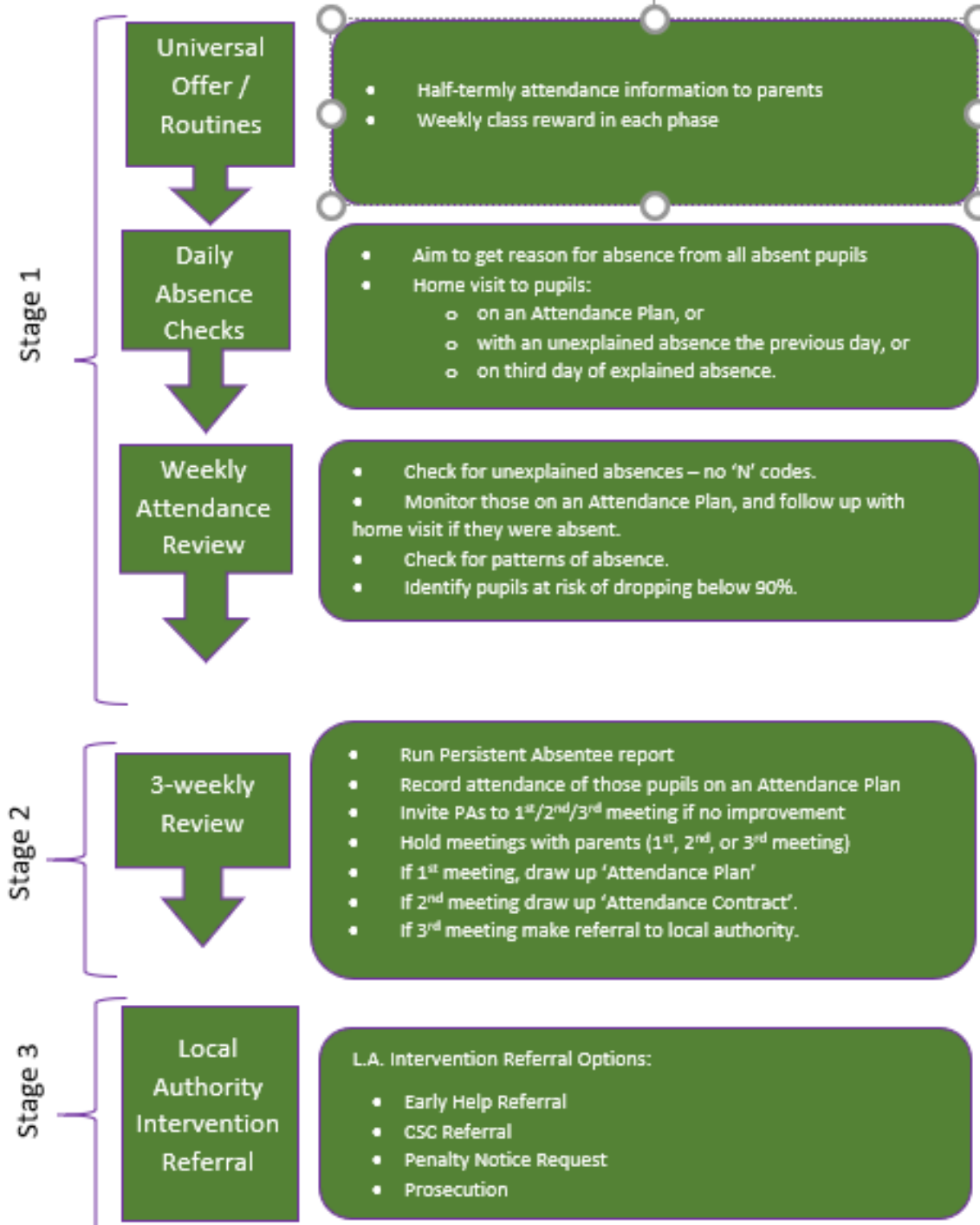
20. Appendices

The following documents are those most frequently used in our school to promote good attendance. There are other documents and letters that may be used less frequently. For further examples, please contact The Attendance Officer.

Appendix A – overview of attendance process



Attendance Interventions Overview



Appendix C – concerns letter

nurture • grow • flourish

Address: Gaythorne Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD5 7HU Telephone: 01274 731698
Email: office@ststephens.bradford.sch.uk Web: ststephens.bradford.sch.uk



Dear Parent/Carer of,

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first Letter to register our concern with parents. We are therefore writing to you due to <Name of pupil>'s current level of attendance:

Attendance <current attendance> %
Authorised Absence <current AA> %
Unauthorised Absence <current UA> %

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year
Excellent attendance! These children will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Children will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.
95%: 10 days absence a year
These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Children who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.
90% and below: 19 days + absence a year
The Government classes children in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible for them to keep up with work. Parents of children in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by Bradford Council.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance, please attend our parent café every Wednesday to speak to our attendance lead.

Yours sincerely

Mr Urry

Appendix D – invitation to 1st meeting

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Address: Gaythorne Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD5 7HU Telephone: 01274 731698
Email: office@ststephens.bradford.sch.uk Web: ststephens.bradford.sch.uk



Dear Parent/Carer of,

Since we wrote to you on <date of 1st letter>, <name of pupil>'s attendance has failed to improve significantly and is now <attendance percentage>%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year – your child will spend more time at home than at school this academic year!

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with <name of pupil>. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

We wish to help <name of pupil> to improve <his/her> attendance. I would like you to attend a meeting in school with me on <date> at <time> to discuss what we can all do to help <name of pupil> attend more regularly.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange another time and date to meet.

We would appreciate your support to make sure <name of child>'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and may refer your child's absence to Bradford Council for consideration of a penalty notice fine or legal action if unauthorised absence continues to occur.

Mr Urry

Appendix E – Notice to Improve Letter

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Address: Gaythorne Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD5 7HU Telephone: 01274 731698
Email: office@ststephens.bradford.sch.uk Web: ststephens.bradford.sch.uk



Dear Parent/Carer of,

School Attendance - Notice to Improve

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444, Education Act 1996.

You, ((firstname)) ((lastname)) are a parent/carer of ((child_firstname)) ((child_lastname)) born ((child_date_of_birth)), (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at ((current_school)).

The school have offered support to you and your family to try and help improve ((child_firstname))'s attendance, including:

1. Telephone calls. The school contacted you every day your child was absent to understand why your child was absent and to offer their support with any issues your child may be having.
2. An Attendance Overview Letter. The school wrote to you, letting you know about ((child_firstname))'s attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.
3. An Attendance Support Meeting Invite. The school invited you to a meeting to discuss your child's unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. You were notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence, and you did not effectively engage with the support offered.

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered to your family, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between ((absence_dates)), ((child_firstname)) failed to attend regularly at ((current_school)), which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded.

You now have twenty school days (4 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days.

NB – A Penalty Notice may be issued as soon as an unauthorised absence is recorded.

More information regarding this notice can be found by scanning the QR code below. If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact either the school or Bradford Council's Attendance Support Team as soon as possible:

Bradford Council Attendance Support Team
Address: 3rd Floor, Britannia House, Hall Ings, Bradford, BD1 1EE
Telephone: 01274 435743
Email: attendance@bradford.gov.uk

Appendix F – Support Plan

Attendance Support Plan

The aim of this plan is to work together to improve school attendance and avoid the need for legal action.

Child:	School: St Stephens CE Primary	Year:
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Meeting held on:	
Meeting attended by:	
Apologies:	

In the last 10 weeks...

Sessions Attended:		Sessions Missed:		Unauthorised Absences:	
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What are we worried about? - Past harm/Any complicating factors/Danger statements - We are worried about									
What's working well? - Existing safety/Existing strength									
The parent/carer will:									
The school will:									
The professional network will: (if any other professionals are working with the family)									
Attendance Goal/s:									
On a scale of 0-10, where 10 is where we have no worries about the child/ren's attendance and the impact that is having on them and 0 is the most worried we could be about this child/ren's attendance and the impact that this is having on them (Circle Score below).									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Appendix G – Application form for extended leave



LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

St Stephens C of E Primary School

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. St. Stephen's expects all parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school whenever possible. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a pupil's academic attainment.

At St. Stephen's Primary School, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to decide on whether or not leave will be authorised. Leave is only authorised in exceptional circumstances.

When leave is unauthorised a fine may be issued by Bradford Council and your child may lose their place at school.

Unauthorised absences are referred to Bradford Council who will issue you with a Penalty Notice in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. A Penalty Notice is a £160 fine issued to each parent of each child, but a discounted rate of £80 applies if the fine is paid within 21 days. If a penalty notice is issued due a second period of absence, there is no discounted rate, and £160 must be paid within 28 days.

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school at least 2 weeks before the intended departure. You may then be invited into school for a meeting with a member of the Attendance Team. Otherwise you will hear back from us in writing.

PARENT'S SECTION

First Name(s) of Child:	Last Name(s) of Child:
Class Name:	Year Group:
First Name of Parent/Guardian:	Last Name of Parent/Guardian:
Mobile Telephone Number:	Home Telephone Number:
Reason for Absence (please give as much detail as possible):	
ALTERNATIVE OR OVERSEAS CONTACT NUMBER FOR TRAVEL:	
ALTERNATIVE OR OVERSEAS EMAIL ADDRESS:	
Number of school days to be absent:	Destination:
First day of absence:	Date due back in school:
Parents/Guardian Signature:	Date:

SCHOOLS SECTION (to be completed by schools only)

Date of meeting:	Head Teacher's Signature:	Date:
Current attendance (year to date):	Attendance in previous year:	Dates of previous extended leave (if any):
Leave authorised?	Fine to be issued?	Notes:

Appendix H – Daily Attendance Routine

Task	When	Who
Text sent to parents of children late the day before reminding what time school starts.	7:50	Attendance Lead.
Administrator listens to any answer phone messages and record absences on Arbor.	8:15	Administrator
Administrator enter reasons for absence from in person calls or voicemail, onto Arbor before 9am.	Before 9am	Administrator
Teachers start registers at 8:55, must be finished by 9am.	8:55-9:00	Teachers
Administrators to update <u>INventry/Arbor lates</u> from 9am (not before 9, as teachers doing register after a late mark has been entered will over-ride any late marks).	From 9:00	Administrator
Attendance leads check absence list. Text message sent to all absences with 'N' code	From 9:05	Attendance Leads
Attendance Leads view absent pupils on Arbor, and decide on appropriate follow-up, either: - phone call - home visit (on 1 st Day of absence if no contact made, or on 3 rd day of absence if reasons previously given) - Medical follow up phone call from Anne	9:15-9:30	Attendance Leads
Check no 'N' codes still on register	9:30	Attendance Lead
'U' code text message sent to all outstanding 'N' absences.	9:30	Attendance Lead
Phone children with 'I' code to see how they are and if they can be expected in next day.	Afternoon (if possible)	Administrators
<p>Record absence notifications on Arbor with:</p> <p>[method of receiving notification – phone call or in person] [Time] [Initials of person taking message] followed by summary of conversation, including who left the message.</p>		