

Stone Bay School. Policy Document.

Group E Policy.

E19. Attendance Policy.

Group E policies are not statutory and no paper copies will be kept. The original word copy will be stored in our policy library, a PDF version will be accessible on our website.

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Headteacher.

Mission Statement.

We accept all students **as they are** and believe that every one of them is **entitled** to the very **best education**, delivered in an **environment** that is **supportive, caring** and **safe**.

Our goal is to develop our students to become:

- **Successful** Learners.
- As **independent** as possible.
- **Confident** individuals and self-advocates.
- **Effective** communicators and **contributors**.
- **Responsible** citizens.

We will do this by working to **ensure we get every aspect of their provision just right**, helping them to achieve academically, personally, socially and morally.

Stone Bay School: ***“getting it right for every student”***.

Statement of Intent

Stone Bay School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. Regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance.

We accept that our Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Stone Bay School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines the systematic development of their:

- Expressive communication skills.
- Receptive communication skills.
- Resilience.
- Ability to self-manage their actions.
- Levels of self-control.
- Levels of Independence.
- Levels of Engagement
- Educational attainment and progress.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a **safeguarding issue** requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and

their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Students are expected to arrive by 9am. Considering the distances some students have to travel the school will expect transport colleagues to inform the school if a child has left home at the normal time but is held up on the road.

The Role of the School Staff

At Stone Bay School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Assistant Heads of the Lower and Upper school have overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues in the first instance and attendance is a standing agenda item at Assistant Heads meetings.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark students present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Heads of the Lower and Upper school of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Heads of the Lower and Upper school to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes).
- The student Liaison manager will follow up on any issues of persistent lateness or absence and may involve external partners as they work to resolve any issues that have been identified that are impediments to high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance – the class teacher or form tutor to investigate and notify the Heads of the Lower and Upper school of concerns who will then contact the parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the Student Liaison Manager will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the service is appropriate, the Student Liaison Manager will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification if required.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a [Child Missing Education referral](#) for the following circumstances:-

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

Lateness

At Stone Bay School the register is taken at 9.10am and 2.10pm. Students arriving after these times will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.30am and 2.30pm. If the school have not been notified about a problem with transport students arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with [Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct: April 2017](#), when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) may be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances".

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Where Penalty Notices are issued, they are issued in accordance with [Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct: April 2017](#).

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.
- Situations where a break may play a significant role in ameliorating difficulties a student may be facing in their lives due primarily to their Autism.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body ([Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Safeguarding, Equality and Equal Opportunities Statement

Stone Bay School, and all policies and procedures, will promote equality of opportunity for all students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The school will ensure that no student or staff member is disadvantaged, discriminated against or treated less favourably because of their gender (including gender reassignment), race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or due to pregnancy or maternity.

Stone Bay School aims to;

- Foster good relationships and create effective partnerships with all sections of the community
- Ensure that the school’s service delivery, commissioning and employment practices will not discriminate unlawfully, either directly or indirectly
- Provide an environment free from fear and discrimination, where diversity, respect and dignity are valued and celebrated

All aspects of Safeguarding will be embedded into school life and will remain the responsibility of all members of our school community.