



# Attendance Policy 2024 - 2026

**Written by:** BTCT & Sharon Hooper  
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## Attendance Policy

This policy draws from and must be read in conjunction with the [DFE Guidance working together to improve school attendance](#) and [summary table of responsibilities](#) for school attendance.

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### 1. Key Contacts

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## 2. Introduction

As part of the Bridgwater & Taunton College Trust, our shared and common purpose is to work together to ensure that every child achieves, and whatever their background, receives a high-quality education. We have a shared belief that excellent school attendance is a critical factor in your child's achievement at school and we are committed to helping every child and their family to achieve this.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the Trust will encourage families of Nursery children, and Reception children who are not yet compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. Excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education they should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We appreciate that the barriers to accessing education can be wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Improving attendance is everyone's business: effective communication and joined-up working are paramount.

**The roles and responsibilities of the Trust, our School, parents and pupils, can be found in Appendix C and how we manage absences in Appendix D.**

## 3. Our Commitment

**Stanchester Academy** strives for 100% attendance for all pupils; however, we appreciate that children can be ill or have rare unavoidable absences for other reasons. Therefore, our overall school target is at least 96% attendance. **No Stanchester Academy pupil should have more than 7 days (14 sessions) absence.**

All staff are made aware of how each of their roles impacts on attendance and punctuality and that every member of staff, regardless of their role, can make a difference (See Appendix C for 'Roles and Responsibilities'). All staff will receive training commensurate with their roles. The school's attendance team will listen to and support pupils and parents/carers to achieve good attendance and punctuality and will work closely with them where absence is a cause for concern. We will report to you 3 times per year on how your son/daughter is performing in school, including what their attendance and punctuality rate is (including %, days & sessions absence) and how this relates to their attainment. We will celebrate and reward good and improving attendance by:

- Regular messages & letters home regarding positive attendance
- Postcards for improved attendance
- Certificates & badges
- Celebrating class & tutor attendance

## 4. Effects of Non-Attendance

Being in school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development.



Attendance	Days	Sessions	Missed lessons
98%	4	8	At least 20 lessons
95%	9	18	At least 45 lessons
93%	13	26	At least 65 lessons
90%	19	38	At least 95 lessons
85%	30	60	At least 150 lessons

### 5. Impact of lateness on learning

When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss important events like notices, interventions, instructions, assemblies and phonics. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They miss settling into the day and being sociable with their friends. The image below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others



Being late after the register closes is an unauthorised absence, a U code. Unauthorised absences can lead to legal action.

SIMS Electronic Registration and Codes		AM	PM
Registration Times		8:20	12:10
Present Marks	/	Present	
	B	Alternative provision	
	V	Educational visit / Residential	
	W	Work experience	
	L	Late (before register closed)	
Absent Marks	O	Unauthorised	
	U	Unauthorised late (after register closed)	
	M	Medical	
	G	Unauthorised holiday	
	I	Illness	
	C1	Participating in regulated performance	
	C2	Reduced Part-time timetable	
	C	Exceptional circumstances	
	N	No reason provided yet	

Punctuality is an important life skill, and we teach this and encourage them to attend learning on time in order not to disrupt the learning of others.

Students that arrive late to school are recorded as L codes. If they are late (after registration closed) they will be recorded as U. A U code is considered an unauthorised absence and affects attendance in the same way.

Late marks incur a sanction. The minutes late to lessons are tracked and reviewed in line with our behaviour policy. A student arriving after the late bell will incur a B2 sanction. Repeated lates may incur additional sanctions.

If a student arrives 20 mins or more late to a lesson, without a valid reason they will incur a B3 sanction. If a student arrives 40 mins or more late to a lesson, without a valid reason they will incur a B4 sanction.



The minutes late are tracked and reviewed in line with our behaviour policy. Repeated lates may incur additional sanctions.

If a student is considered to be deliberately truanting a lesson, this will be recorded as a B4, parents will be contacted via On call staff. Repeated truancy may incur additional sanctions.

AM Start	Late	Unauthorised Late
8:20	8:21 – 8:50	After 8:50

PM Reg	Late	Unauthorised
12:10	12:15	After 12:40

## 6. Our Expectations of Parents / Carers

In line with government guidelines, we expect parents and carers to:

- Ensure your child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify us as soon as possible when your child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Engage in support, as and when necessary.

**Further information on understanding attendance can be found in appendix A**

## 7. Absence Procedures

The school day starts at 8:20 am. It ends at 2:50pm

Students can access the school site from 8am daily

Students should arrive no later than 8:20am to give them enough time to get to tutor time. An attendance register will be taken each school day at the start of tutor time. A register is taken in each lesson.

Students will be recorded as;

- present
- attending an approved educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT YOU MUST:

Contact us before **8:20am** on the first day of absence and every further day of absence until they return via our dedicated phone line – 01935 827201, there is a 24-hour voicemail, or email [attendance@stanchester.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stanchester.co.uk)

Please be aware that you may be asked to provide medical evidence such as a doctor / consultant note if your son/daughter' has had **more than 15 days absence** and you have received a letter informing you that their attendance is a cause for concern.



#### IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT WE WILL:

- Contact you on the day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Call you to check for any concerns when your child has had a total of **7 school days (14 sessions)** of absence.
- Write to you when your child has a total of **9 school days (18 sessions)** of absence to inform you they have fallen below the DfE requirement of **96%** attendance. **(Attendance letter 1)**
- Write to you and invite you in to discuss attendance concerns if your child has a total of **13 days (26 sessions)** of absence to see how we can provide support to ensure they do not become a persistent absentee. **(Attendance letter 2)**
- Contact you when your child has had **10 days (20 sessions)** of absence due to illness to say they are approaching the threshold for informing the local authority regarding absence for illness and to contact us if any support is needed for your child's medical needs. **(Illness concern letter)**
- Contact you if your child has had **15 days (30 sessions)** of absence to inform you that we will be notifying the local authority as per DfE guidelines and documentation will be required to authorise any absence due to illness. This can be a doctor's note, hospital letter, appointment card, copy of prescription or packaging from prescribed medication. **(Medical evidence/illness concern letter)**
- Refer the matter to the Education Engagement Service if attendance continues to be a concern or support has not been effective.

#### Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school reception by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

#### 8. Approved Educational Activity (AEA)

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case. If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, the school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. **Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis.** Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

#### 9. Safeguarding

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance, [Keeping](#)



**[Children Safe in Education](#)** we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

We are aware that children with unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education require a degree of professional curiosity and will always apply a support first approach with our families.

### 10. Mental Health & Wellbeing

**Stanchester Academy** educates pupils to look after their mental health and wellbeing from an early age. They are also taught to be able to discuss and articulate their emotions and ask for help and support when they need it. Links to our PSHE curriculum can be found via our main school website

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead or the academy SENDCo for further advice and information on the support available. Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

[Parents Mental Health Support | Advice for Your Child | YoungMinds](#)

We also have lots of staff in school to support students with their mental health & wellbeing. Please contact the school office [office@stanchester.co.uk](mailto:office@stanchester.co.uk) to arrange to speak to a specific member of staff regarding health and well-being.

If you, or your child need support or guidance while we are closed, [this link](#) contains a wide range of external support services which are available to you.

### 11. Religious Observance

**Stanchester Academy** acknowledges the multi-faith nature of our school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### 12. Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.





To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

### 13. Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a Suspension. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on suspensions](#). Any suspension must be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent / guardian of the suspension. If the pupil is a Looked After Child, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

A pupil who is suspended from school cannot be in a public place during school hours and if seen in a public space a Penalty Notice can be issued by the Local Authority.

### 14. Unauthorised Absence

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark (30 minutes after the start of the school day)
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Being up too late and then too tired to attend school
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.



### 15. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage families and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent/guardian to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Parents will be asked to meet with a member of staff to discuss the matter.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue, and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

### 16. Persistent Absence (PA)

In accordance with DFE guidance, your child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This means **19 or more days of absence** over the whole year. We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and Parents/Carers will be informed of this immediately.

In this circumstance we expect families to:

- Work with us and other agencies to help us understand your child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered which may include more formal support such as a EES Attendance Support Plan, parenting contract and / or a voluntary Early Help Assessment.

We will:

- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers, including working with other partners where necessary.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.



- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about possible future legal interventions where there is a lack of engagement.
- Intensify support through external agencies if we have safeguarding concerns.

### 17. Severe Absence (SA)

In accordance with DFE guidance, your child is considered to be a 'severe absentee' if they are absent for more than 50% of their current attendance. This would mean over **95 days (190 sessions)** of absence over the whole year. Any pupil who is at this level of attendance is deemed to be at serious risk of harm.

In these circumstances we expect families to:

- Work with us and other agencies to help us understand your child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered which will include more formal support such as a parenting contract and / or a voluntary Early Help Assessment.

We will:

- Continue support as for persistently absent pupils.
- Agree a joint approach with the Education Engagement Service and consider and an EHA, EHCP, or alternative form of education provision.

### 18. Term Time Leave of Absence Requests

The school will only consider a formal application (See Appendix E) for a leave of absence at least **two weeks** in advance of the dates requested. Only exceptional circumstances will warrant a leave of absence. We will consider each application individually and take into account exceptional circumstances.

"The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours."

The following factors will be considered:

- Can this event take place in the school holidays?
- What the current level of attendance is and unauthorised absence over the year to date. No term time leave will be approved for students under 97%
- Any leave of absence taken previously.
- The time requested linked to examination / assessment period. The school will not consider term time leave requests in formal examination years.
- The SEND needs of the pupil.

Any period of leave taken without the authorisation of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and a will be referred to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

[Absence Request Form](#)



### 19. Children Missing Education (CME)

**Stanchester Academy** will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow Somerset Child Missing Education process and make CME referral as appropriate and in accordance with our safeguarding policy and guidelines

### 20. Vulnerable Children

It is recognised widely that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to poor attendance than others. Pupils with medical needs, SEN, Disabilities, Young Carers, Pupils with a social worker or in receipt of the pupil premium are likely to require more targeted support. These groups will be carefully monitored, and intervention targeted appropriately. In exceptional cases, schools can gain advice from the BTCT Central Inclusion team. The school recognises that "all schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more", (DfE guidance, October 2016)

### 21. Pupils who go missing on or abscond from school site

Staff must always be very aware of the potential for children to go missing either onsite or by absconding from the school premises. For the purpose of this policy, the term 'absconding' is used to cover incidents of pupils leaving the school grounds without permission (an adult is present but is unable to stop the pupil). 'Missing from the school site' is used to describe a pupil who cannot be found, and it is unclear if the pupil is still onsite or have left the school grounds.

All staff must be aware of the procedures to be followed if a child goes missing off the school site. This can be a very stressful time for all concerned. Every care is taken to ensure that all children are kept safe. Risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the school and setting is as safe as possible, and children should never be allowed to leave the premises on their own, without parent consent. It is possible, however, that despite all precautions a child cannot be accounted for and goes missing. This policy is designed to put in place swift and effective actions to locate any missing child and to notify and involve parents and the authorities at every appropriate point.

#### **Preventative Procedures**

Systems must be in place to ensure that children do not go missing off the school site. These include:

##### Site security

Ensuring that all exits are kept closed.

- Children must be made aware of the boundaries of the school.
- Doors are activated by using a fobs and should not be propped open. Pupils must not have access to the fobs, unless as part of their individualised programme, risk assessed and for internal doors only.
- Effective supervision
- Children must be supervised at all times and there will be sufficient staff available to ensure this happens.
- Registration should take place regularly through the day and particularly when a class has been out of the classroom.



- Parents/carers must inform the school in advance if their child has an appointment which will require them to arrive at or leave school during school hours. This is logged on the system.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone other than the authorised persons unless the school has been informed otherwise and that alternative person is identified.
- Any visitors to school will be signed in and out. They must be let into the school by a member of staff; also seen off the premises by a member of staff to ensure that no doors are left open, and the safety of the children is maintained.

#### **Staff Guidance for Pupils missing on or absconding from the School Site (Reactive Procedures)**

- If a child cannot be found, a member of the On call staff must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt action must be taken by all.
- The staff on call should check the students' lessons and search the school site for the student.
- On call staff to search school site and/ or the area in the immediate vicinity of the school. All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the school site.
- If after 10 – 20 minutes of thorough searching, the child is still missing, the parent will be contacted via attendance task and/or on call staff. **The timescale is dependent on the student's vulnerability and level of need**
- If a member of staff finds the child, On call and attendance must be told at once. Parents, and any other authorities will be notified.
- Further risk assessments will be carried out where required to ensure that the incident does not happen again.

#### **Additional staff guidance for Pupils absconding from the School Site:**

- While help is arriving, the staff member is to closely follow the pupil as best they can and provide updates for other staff members in order for them to come and help. Staff must only follow the pupil if it is safe to do so and continuing to evaluate the risks as they move away from the school premises.
- On Call staff members to respond to urgent call for help, including the Head teacher and members of the SLT. Staff who are allocated to a pupil are to remain in school and not respond. Further assistance will be called if required.
- SLT to instruct Pastoral support to inform parents to be called to update on the situation.
- In the event that the pupil is moving towards a potentially life threatening hazard (e.g. a busy road), the closest staff member is to provide the pupil with information about the situation (e.g. "you are going towards a main road where you can get hurt"). Provide an alternative route for the young person if they need to keep moving or if there is an immediate threat to life, the member of staff will need to warn the pupil that they will need to support the young person to stop. Staff will support the pupil to stop by using what is reasonable, proportionate and necessary as outlined in Team Teach.
- Once the situation has been resolved, a full written account of the incident will be recorded and held on file.
- Further risk assessments will be carried out to ensure that the incident does not happen again.



## 22. Long Term Absence and Reintegration to School

We recognise that pupils who have had long term absence from school need support to return and encourage families in these circumstances to contact the Senior Attendance Lead to arrange a reintegration plan for any pupil returning to school following a significant absence from school

## 23. Part Time Timetables

A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. It will be time limited with regular two weekly review meetings with a view to the pupil attending full-time. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the absence will go down as authorised by the school.

When a student is on a reduced part-time timetable students are expected to use their Teams pages to access any revision that has been set. Additional work will be set on a case-by-case basis dependant on reasons for and time of part-time timetable.

## 21. Legal Interventions

At all times Stanchester Academy will try and support families without the use of legal intervention. However, if parents/carers are not supporting good attendance, the school, via the local authority, may exercise its legal powers to address poor attendance in school with all parents/carers who have the day-to-day responsibility for the child.

These interventions include:

**Attendance Contract** - A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school or local authority to address poor attendance. It is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. If there is non-compliance, then an alternative course of action will be taken which may lead to fines and prosecution.

**Education Supervision Order (ESO)** - This can be used when a formal parenting contract has failed. It is an action plan that would be overseen by the high or Family Court. Non-compliance with the directions given in an ESO can lead to a fine of up to £1000.

**Penalty Notices** - Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows penalty notices (fines) to be issued to parents/carers. They are an alternative measure to the prosecution of parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child attends school. A penalty notice will be issued by the local authority in line with its code of conduct when a child's absence has not been authorised by the school. This is issued to any adult with parental responsibility for each child. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent/carer per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents/carers fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then the local authority may decide to prosecute the parents/carers.

**Attendance Prosecution:** If a child fails to attend school regularly at which they are registered then the parents/carers may be guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted by the local authority. They have the power to prosecute parents/carers who fail to comply with a school attendance order under section 443 of the Education Act 1996 or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The fines available to the courts if the parents/carers are found guilty could be between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents/carers for imprisonment for up to 3 months.

**Parenting Order** - The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions



(e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. Any breach of the order can lead to a fine of up to £1000.

#### 24. Statutory and Legal Guidance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This policy aligns with the following statutory guidance and regulations:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amended) 2013
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013) The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations in 2013 only allowing head teachers to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In line with these regulations, requests for term-time leave will not be granted. Additional legal requirements relating to school attendance can be found in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

#### Links to other policies

The following policies are available on the Stanchester Academy website: -

- [Behaviour and Rewards](#)
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)
- [Anti Bullying](#)

The following documents are available on the BTC Trust website: -

- [SEND](#)
- [Complaints](#)
- [Equality](#)

Commented [NC1]: Add links for individual schools

#### APPENDIX A - UNDERSTANDING ATTENDANCE TYPES

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day.

This shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. If an absence is authorised, then this means the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as the reason for absence. An unauthorised absence is where the school is not



satisfied with the reasons given for absence or no reason is given. It may also be unauthorised if attendance level is below target and no medical evidence has been given.

This Attendance Policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Stanchester Academy has a duty to refer to the Local Authority any child of compulsory school age who is

- continuously absent from school for 20 sessions (2 weeks) without explanation
- has irregular attendance
- is persistently late to attend school
- has an unauthorised leave of absence

## DEFINITIONS

**Session** - is a term related to the recording of absence data. Each school day has two sessions, morning and afternoon registration and attendance must be recorded for each.

**Authorised absence** - This means the school has given approval in advance or has accepted an explanation for absence.

**Unauthorised absence** - This is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence or no reason has been given.

**Persistent absentee (PA)** - The government threshold for Persistent Absence is 90% or lower. This includes ALL absence regardless of whether it is authorised or not. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents and carers' support and cooperation to tackle this.

**Severe absentee (SA)** - The government threshold for severe absence is 50% or lower. This includes ALL absence regardless of whether it is authorised or not. Any pupil who is at this level of attendance is at serious risk of harm and we need parents and carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

## Appendix B – Graduated Response and Stanchester Tiers of support

Trust wide

Stanchester

100%	Tier 0 100%
<b>Rewards system</b> Acknowledge attendance achievement to the family	Termly 100% attendance reward certificates Celebrated in rewards assembly Regular HOY and Tutor praise
4 School Days / 8 Sessions Absence	Tier 0 (99.9 – 98%)
<b>End of Year = 98%</b> Acknowledge attendance achievement to the family	Regular tutor praise Celebrated in rewards assembly Reminder to inform school on 1 <sup>st</sup> day of absence and any subsequent absence
6 School Days / 12 Sessions Absence	Tier 0 (97.9 – 96%)
<b>End of Year = 97%</b> Acknowledge attendance achievement to the family	Regular tutor discussion – check in





	Tutor provides positive reinforcements Celebrated in rewards assembly Reminder to inform school on 1 <sup>st</sup> day of absence and any subsequent absence
<b>7 School Days / 14 Sessions Absence</b>	
Initial call to check for any concerns.	Tutor to raise any concerns Tutor to check in
<b>9 School Days / 18 Sessions Absence</b>	<b>Tier 1 (95.9 – 94%)</b>
Trigger for <b>Letter 1</b> . Under DfE requirements and missing out on learning, social development, time with peers and all the other opportunities at school.	Letter 1 sent home Regular tutor conversations recorded on sims
<b>13 School Days / 26 Sessions Absence</b>	<b>Tier 2 (90 – 93.9%)</b>
Trigger for <b>Letter 2</b> .	Letter 2 sent home Regular tutor conversations recorded on sims
Meeting request. School Attendance Meeting and Attendance support plan.	<b>Tier 3 (89.9 and below)</b>  As for tier 2 but where School attendance Meeting and Attendance support plan (ASP) would be appropriate  Additional actions are considered dependant on the outcome of the ASP – see below

<b>Once ASP in Place. Review in 3 weeks. Modify support or continue. 6 Week Outcome Meeting.</b>		
<b>Significant Improvement</b>	<b>Some Improvement</b>	<b>No Improvement</b>
Praise and close ASP. Monitoring period. Consider Medical Evidence. Possible WPN if any unauthorised in near future.	Extend ASP for further 3 weeks. Amend support as needed. Consider Medical Evidence. Possible WPN.	No more authorised without medical evidence. Consider WPN or referral to EES.

<b>Percentage Attendance</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Intended Impacts</b>
100% Tier 0	Termly 100% attendance reward letters and certificates.	Attendance Officer analyses data.	Motivation for students, improved communication with parents.
98 – 99.9% Tier 0	Monitor attendance through tutor tracking.	Attendance Officer completes and shares with all staff.	Visual reminder for students.



	1 <sup>st</sup> day of absence or daily there after parent/carer informs school	Tutors provide positive reinforcement	Correct coding on child's attendance register
96 – 97.9% Tier 0	Monitor attendance through tutor tracking.	Tutors provide positive reinforcement	Allows tutors and teachers to identify concerns early. Issues raised to Attendance/Pastoral team
94 – 95.9% Tier 1	Letter 1 is sent home. Regular tutor conversation with student. Recorded on sims.	Attendance officer. Tutors provide regular communication	Identification of any concern with parent. Written comms of concern.
90 – 93.9% Tier 2	Letter 2 is sent home. Regular tutor conversation with student. Recorded on sims.	Attendance officer. Tutors provide regular communication.	Identification of any concern with parent. Written comms of concern.
50 – 89.9% Tier 3	Letter 3 is sent - Medical evidence can be requested. HOY involved. Cause for concern. WPN issued. ESS referral Pastoral support plans in place Meetings with parent (and any other agencies as applicable) SEN support in place as required Attendance support plan – 15 day monitoring and review period. Referrals for any relevant external or internal agencies Legal attendance process started	Attendance officer. HOY. Senco and Attendance Lead – as applicable to student needs	Improved attendance Opportunity for supporting the parents/carers to improve attendance  Clear targets for improvement set. Regularly monitored and reviewed – 15 day cycle for improvement.
Below 50% Tier 4	Severe absence. Intervention as for tier 3. Regular meetings with parents/external services	SLT lead for attendance	

### Appendix C – Attendance Roles & Responsibilities

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
- 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

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 learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement with a focus on disadvantaged learners
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Creating and reviewing policy and procedures
- Reducing absence levels of absence across all year groups
- Weekly analysis of vulnerable groups
- Providing workable data to middle leaders to support workload reduction
- Tracking attendance of all Stanchester learners in order to provide support to families as required with a focus on disadvantage and strategies to reduce absence levels for these learners
- Using research and national guidance to support effective strategy and implementation
- Training and induction support for attendance administrators and new pastoral staff
- Oversight of any learners on reduced timetables
- Provide support with complex cases
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Organising attendance support meeting and referrals in response to absence
- Working with students and families to support improved attendance
- Working in close collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure children missing from education have a safeguarding first response
- Ensuring there is a robust process for accurate and timely register taking.
- Advising the Headteacher (where authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed penalty notices
- Attending EES meetings
- Working with EES to tackle persistent and severe absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance can be contacted through the school office.

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a timely response to absence at school through first day truancy/absence processes



- Ensuring that the reasons for absence are accurately recorded
- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Take messages from parents for the senior leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance
- Tracking attendance of all Stanchester students
- Providing regular attendance data and reports to school staff
- Overseeing requests for term time absence and liaising with the designated senior leader regarding these

The attendance officer can be contacted [attendance@stanchester.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stanchester.co.uk)

The Parent Family Support officer (PFSA) is responsible for:

- Conducting welfare checks in line with our safeguarding policy, in cases where attendance is a concern

Tutors are responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance of their tutor group and raising concerns to attendance and pastoral team
- Regularly praising good attendance
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader or attendance officer
- Communicating with parents regarding attendance concerns (at tier 1, tier 2 and initial concern level)

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Reporting attendance concerns with designated senior leader for attendance
- Communicating with parents regarding attendance concerns (at tier 2 and 3 level (below 90%))
- Completing Attendance support plans in communication with the designated senior leader
- Reviewing attendance of their year group regularly in communication with designated senior leader

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08.20am 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.
- Provide medical evidence as requested in line with the required Trust graduated response

Learners are expected to:

- Arrive at school on time by 08:20am and to attend every timetabled session on time.



## Appendix D: Letters

### Letter 1

Dear

I am writing to highlight that <<chosen\_forename>>'s attendance has dropped below the Government's requirements of 96%

They have now had <<AUTHORISED ABSENCE>> sessions of authorised absence and <<UNAUTHORISED – ABSENCE>> sessions of unauthorised absence.

We are aware that there are many things that can affect a student's attendance but wanted to highlight it as a concern to enable you to avoid any further absence where possible. We want to ensure that <<chosen\_forename>> does not miss all the wonderful opportunities school has to offer, their time with their friends or fall behind in their learning.

Please find enclosed our Every Day Counts attendance leaflet with lots of helpful information and guidance. If we can support <<chosen\_forename>> in improving <<his/her>> attendance in any way, please contact your child's class teacher or tutor in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

### Letter 2

Following our previous communication regarding <<forename>>'s attendance, I wish to let you know that your son / daughter's attendance continues to be of concern.

Even when we have reasons for absence when a student has 9 school days or 18 sessions of absence, we write to families to highlight this concern and invite you to contact us to arrange an Attendance Support Meeting.

We would like to understand the causes of any absence and avoid any further absence this academic year as we want to prevent <<chosen\_forename>> becoming a persistent absentee. The government threshold for Persistent Absence is 90% or lower. This includes ALL absence regardless of whether it is authorised or not. 90% is 19 school days or 38 sessions of absence.

<<Chosen\_forename>> currently has <<authorised absence>> sessions of authorised absence and <<unauthorised absence>> sessions of unauthorised absence.

If you feel an Attendance Support Meeting would be beneficial to prevent further absence for <<chosen\_forename>> please contact us at [attendance@stanchester.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stanchester.co.uk)

Yours Sincerely



### Attendance Support Meeting Invite

Dear

We are writing regarding the attendance of <<chosen\_forename>>.

<<Chosen\_Forename>>'s attendance is now below 93% and we would like to invite you to attend an Attendance Support Meeting to prevent them becoming a persistent absentee. The government threshold for Persistent Absence is 90% or lower. This includes ALL absence regardless of whether it is authorised or not. 90% is 19 school days or 38 sessions of absence.

<<Chosen\_forename>> currently has <<authorised absence>> sessions of authorised absence and <<unauthorised absence>> sessions of unauthorised absence.

We have made an appointment for you at **time** , on **day, date**. The purpose of this meeting is to put in place an Attendance Support Plan for <<chosen\_forename>>. If this is not convenient, please contact us in advance to rearrange.

We look forward to working with you to improve <<chosen\_forename>>'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

### 10 Days of Medical / Illness Absence Letter

Dear

I wish to bring to your attention that <<chosen\_forename>> now has at least **10 school days / 20 sessions of absence**. I have noticed that the majority of <<chosen\_forename>>'s absences seem to be for illness or medical reasons.

The Department for Education guidelines state that when a student has 15 school days / 30 sessions of absence for illness or medical reasons we should submit a sickness return to the local authority. We have therefore made an appointment for you at **time** , on **day, date**. The purpose of this meeting is to put in place an Attendance Support Plan for <<chosen\_forename>>. If this is not convenient, please contact us in advance to rearrange.

We look forward to working with you to improve <<chosen\_forename>>'s attendance.

Yours Sincerely

### Request for Medical Evidence

Dear

I wish to bring to your attention that <<chosen\_forename>> now has at least **15 school days / 30 sessions of absence**. I have noticed that the majority of <<chosen\_forename>>'s absences seem to be for illness or medical reasons.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to support <<chosen\_forename>> with improving their attendance through an Attendance Support Meeting. Please contact us to arrange this at [attendance@stancehster.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stancehster.co.uk)



In the meantime, with the current level of absence we **will no longer be able to authorise absence** until such time you can provide us evidence such as a valid appointment card or a copy of a prescription which was obtained while attending a medical appointment, then an authorised mark will be placed for <<chosen\_forename>>'s attendance record for the relevant day.

If you wish to contact me to discuss this issue, then please feel free to discuss this matter on the number below.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer

#### Reminder of Medical Evidence

Dear

I have written to you previously to inform you that due to <<Chosen\_forename>>'s low attendance we would not be able to authorise any more absences until such time you can provide us with a valid appointment card, or a copy of a prescription which was obtained while attending a medical appointment.

**This letter is to remind you that until any medical confirmation is received, we will not be able to authorise any absences for illness.**

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to support <<chosen\_forename>> with improving their attendance through an Attendance Support Meeting. Please contact us to arrange this at [attendance@stanchester.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stanchester.co.uk)

Yours sincerely

#### Lates Letter

Dear

I wish to bring to your attention that <<chosen\_forename>> is arriving late to school. It is essential that pupils form good habits of punctual attendance at school from the earliest age. The details of attendance and amount of lateness for <<chosen\_forename>> is detailed in the table below.

Overall attendance %	
Total number of late marks	
Number of unauthorised late marks	

It has been proven that the attendance of a student is strongly linked to their social development and attainment. Children who arrive late often;

- Miss vital parts of the lesson
- Disrupt the class when the lesson is underway
- Find it acutely embarrassing entering a class once a lesson has started

If a pupil arrives at school after the registers have closed without an adequate reason, we are required to record this as an unauthorised absence, this classes as a missed session from school.

AM Start	Late	Unauthorised Late
8:20	8:21 – 8:50	After 8:50



PM Reg	Late	Unauthorised
12.10	12.15	After 12.40

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The image below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year by being late to school every day.



We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they miss out on vital parts of their education. Please could you emphasise to <<chosen\_forename>> how important it is to arrive to school on time. If a meeting to discuss this would help, please let us know, we are happy to support. Please contact us by emailing [attendance@stanchester.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stanchester.co.uk)

We will continue to monitor <<chosen\_forename>>'s attendance and punctuality and hope to see an improvement over the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely

#### Unauthorised Absence / Notice to Improve Information

Dear

I am writing to let you know that <<chosen\_forename's>> attendance continues to be a concern.

His / Her's attendance is now <<attendance percentage>>% with <<sessions absence>> missed sessions. <<unauthorised absence>> of these are unauthorised absences, please see the enclosed registration certificate.

Local authority guidelines state that schools can request a Penalty Notice be issued to parents and carers of pupils with at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absences within 10 school weeks. Please read the enclosed information leaflet.

I need to make you aware that currently XX of the unauthorised absences are currently in the 10 school weeks and if there are any further unauthorised absences, we will have to consider issuing a Notice to Improve. You would be informed of this by letter.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for children and young people to maximise their educational opportunities, personal and social development.





We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to support <<chosen\_forename>> with improving their attendance through an Attendance Support Meeting. Please contact us to arrange this at [attendance@stanchester.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stanchester.co.uk).

Yours sincerely

### Notice to Improve

Dear

Re: Notice to Improve

I am writing to let you know that attendance and unauthorised absences continue to be a concern. <<Chosen\_Forename>>'s attendance is now <<percentage attendance>>% with <<unauthorised absence>> unauthorised absences, XX of which are within 10 school weeks.

As your child is of statutory school age and are not regularly attending **Stanchester Academy**, you as the parent/carers of <<Chosen\_forename>> may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

**You have 15 school days from <<Insert Date>> in which to improve your child's attendance. Should there be any unauthorised absences during this period, including arriving after the close of registration, ENTER SCHOOL NAME will request a Penalty Notice be issued by Somerset Council as per their Code of Conduct. If attendance is good during the 15 days, we will continue to monitor attendance for 3 months and if there are any further unauthorised absences during this 3-month period a Penalty Notice may be requested without further warning.**

A Penalty Notice, if issued, gives you the opportunity to pay a £160 fine within 28 days of the notice being issued or £80 if paid before the 21<sup>st</sup> day. Paying the Penalty Notice, within these time scales, discharges your liability for the above offence for the dates in question. If the Penalty Notice is not paid by the 28<sup>th</sup> day you may be prosecuted for the offence and could be fined £1000 if found guilty.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for children and young people to maximise their educational opportunities.

Please contact **NAME**, Attendance Officer, on **CONTACT NUMBER** if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely

Attendance Lead

### No request for Term Time Leave

Dear

We need to draw your attention to a current period of consecutive school days absence for your children.

We have reason to believe this absence may be for an unrequested period of term-time leave for a holiday. The school's attendance policy clearly states that any planned absence should be requested in advance on the school's Request for Authorised Leave of Absence form.



Unless you provide evidence that this absence was for illness or other unavoidable reason, within 5 school days, this period of absence will be 'G' coded as an unauthorised term time leave for a holiday.

As we cannot retrospectively accept any request for Term-Time Leave we may ask the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice in line with Somerset's Code of Practice.

Please contact ATTENDANCE OFFICER on NUMBER if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely