



## STEPHEN FREEMAN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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### Introduction

Stephen Freeman Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C, I, M, B, P, J, R), unauthorised (O, G) or as an approved educational activity (V, W) (attendance out of school). These codes are available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) as approved by the Government.
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### Lateness

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **9.00** am. The registers will remain open for **30 minutes**.
2. In line with safeguarding procedures any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed (L).
3. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at **1:00pm**

The registers will close at **1.10pm**

4. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
5. Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.
6. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

## **Absence from School**

### First Day Absence

- Parents are expected to call the school for each day of absence before 9am
- Parents are able to report absence via the allocated absence line
- Office staff are responsible for ensuring all registers are updated and correct
- Where no contact has been made by parent, Office staff will conduct first day phone calls and mark the register accordingly
- Office staff will inform the DSL if they have been unable to contact a family.
- DSL will make a follow up phone call and log details

### Third Day Absence

- If a child is still absent for a third day with no contact from the family the Inclusion Office or another member of staff acting on their behalf will conduct a welfare check.
- Welfare check comprises of a visit to the home address to make contact, a letter will be hand delivered requesting immediate contact with the school. ( appendix 1)

### Continuing Absence

- In the instance of continuing absence following a school welfare check, a further letter will be hand delivered requesting contact with the school, if deemed necessary contact will be made with the appropriate agencies Eg. TVP, Family Solutions, Early Help requesting support and additional checks to be made on the family to ensure their safety and wellbeing. This specifically relates to the most vulnerable families who have additional formal support in place or there are concerns regarding the ongoing safety of the children

### Pupil Missing

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 10 consecutive school days and the school are unable to make contact with the family must be referred Thames Valley Police to conduct a home visit. Advice will be sought via Alan Blackmore Pupil Tracking in Oxfordshire.

## **Absence Notes**

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Headteacher will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Actions will take place as follows:

1. Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. (Appendix 2 letter 1)
2. If this continues, the school will remind parents/carers that this attendance / punctuality is STILL a cause for concern. ( Appendix 3 letter 2)
3. Headteacher to invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward – this will include putting a parenting contract in place to improve attendance / punctuality over a short period of time. ) Appendix 4 – attendance contract)
4. Meeting to be held with Headteacher, parent / carer and County Attendance Officer in order to resolve ongoing issue.

## Penalty Notices and Legal Action

### The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence 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 will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions.

If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

## Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The school will use the following methods:

The Home/School agreement.

Phase Group "Welcome Meetings" at the start of each academic year.

Attendance posters and signs around the school.

Attendance newsletters from Headteacher and Governing Body

## Leave of Absence

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

## Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

Weekly class attendance certificates for any class with 97% attendance or higher.

Additional play time for any class achieving 100% weekly attendance.

Termly 99% and 100% attendance certificates for individual children.

Weekly / Termly 100% attendance raffle.

Annual 100% certificates and medal for individual children.

## Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school's target for this academic year is:

## Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

## Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

[1] Unauthorised Absence;

[2] Authorised Absence;

[3] Approved Educational Activity.

**1. Unauthorised Absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

**2. Authorised Absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

**3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

**This policy has been approved by:**

**Headteacher:** .....

**Chair of Governors:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Date to be reviewed:** .....





## STEPHEN FREEMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

*“Everybody; Every Moment; Every Idea Counts”*

Dear parents/carers of [Child’s Name]

As I am sure you are aware, as part of our safeguarding policy, we have a duty of care to ensure the regular attendance of all children in our school. The attendance of all children is closely monitored by our School Leadership, Inclusion Support and Governors as well as Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team.

Our records show that during the school academic year, 2017 – 2018, your child’s attendance was: This falls below the expected attendance figure of **97%**. Therefore, we will be tracking your child’s attendance very closely this year.

**Regular school attendance is essential for all our pupils to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better choices in life.** Even small absences can have a detrimental impact on their education over time. I have enclosed some leaflets that explain the importance of your child being at school every day. I hope that you find them useful.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, or if there is anything that I can do to provide further support.

I hope that we can work together to ensure that your child has a really positive year.

Yours sincerely,

Jess Butler  
Headteacher

Carolyn Hanwell  
Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Lead

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**Address:** Freeman Road, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7BZ  
**Tel:** 01235 814718, **Fax:** 01235 511078  
**E-mail:** [reception.2594@stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:reception.2594@stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk)  
**Website:** [www.stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk)  
**Headteacher:** Jess Butler  
**Deputy Head:** Carolyn Hanwell



## STEPHEN FREEMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

*“Everybody; Every Moment; Every Idea Counts”*

Dear

Re: [Child’s Name]

I am writing to inform you that [Child’s Name] attendance rate currently stands at \_\_\_\_\_ which is below the school minimum target rate of 97%. Please see enclosed registration certificate for your reference.

Whilst we accept that there are times when children are unwell or perhaps there are extenuating circumstances, poor attendance has a negative impact on children’s learning.

Attendance will be closely monitored over the next term and we would expect to see a significant improvement in that time period.

Should there be no improvement, it may be necessary to ask you to attend a school meeting to discuss the matter in more detail.

We would also like to remind you that any absence from school must be explained by letter upon your child’s return. Persistent absence, due to medical reasons will need to be supported by a medical note, GP appointment card or signed prescription from the GP. We also require you to telephone the school on each day of absence.

If you wish to discuss this or any other issue relating to attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely

Jess Butler  
Headteacher

Carolyn Hanwell  
Deputy Head and Attendance Lead

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**Address:** Freeman Road, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7BZ  
**Tel:** 01235 814718, **Fax:** 01235 511078  
**E-mail:** reception.2594@stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk  
**Website:** [www.stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk)  
**Headteacher:** Jess Butler  
**Deputy Head:** Carolyn Hanwell

Appendix 3 – Meeting request



## STEPHEN FREEMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

*"Everybody; Every Moment; Every Idea Counts"*

Dear

Over the past few weeks [Child's Name] attendance has been a cause for concern and since my last letter dated ( ) there has been little or no improvement. I would therefore like to invite you to attend a meeting that may enable us to discuss any issues that you may have.

TIME:

DATE:

VENUE:

It is important that you attend this meeting and we are able to formulate a contract to assist you to improve [Child's Name] school attendance.

If you are unable to attend please contact [Contacts Name] to arrange a more convenient time.

Yours Sincerely

Jess Butler  
Headteacher

Carolyn Hanwell  
Deputy Head and Attendance Lead

Enc. Registration certificate

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**Headteacher:** Jess Butler  
**Deputy Head:** Carolyn Hanwell





School Representative .....

Other Representative .....

Student (if necessary) .....

**Health Absence Record for :xxx DoB: xxxxxx**

XXX's Health issues have been identified as impacting on education. Following discussions with the school it has been agreed that all appointments and contacts with health professionals within the school day will be recorded. Our aim is to improve shared understanding of the ongoing issues and inform decisions about any adjustments needed to enable xxx to improve their school attendance..

Date and Time	Setting (GP, Dentist, Hospital etc)	Organisation Stamp / Health care team Signature	Name and Role or signatory (eg. receptionist, therapist, doctor)

Appendix 5: GP Letter Request



**STEPHEN FREEMAN PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

*“Everybody; Every Moment; Every Idea  
Counts”*

**Date:**

**Our ref:**

**This matter is being dealt with by [insert name]**

Dear

**Re:**

**Address:**

There are concerns regarding the attendance of your son/daughter at [insert school], and [insert child's name] are reported as being due to medical issues. As part of our parenting contract agreement I would be grateful if you could confirm in writing that you have no objection to the school contacting your GP to ask if there is anything about your child's health which maybe impacting on (child's name) ability to attend school that we should be aware of. I will be sending the GP a copy of the parenting contract and **registration certificate** to ensure they have an understanding of the agreement we have made.

Would you therefore kindly complete and sign the section overleaf and return it together with this copy of the letter to the school as soon as possible. **Please retain the second copy as a record for yourself.**

I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your convenience.

Yours sincerely

**Job title**

Direct line:

Email:

ADD GDPR  
STATEMENT

**Enc:**

1 copy of letter;  
GP Permission Slip;  
Stamped addressed envelope.



# STEPHEN FREEMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

*“Everybody; Every Moment; Every Idea Counts”*



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

## GP Permission Slip

Date permission given: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name of GP:	Health Centre:	Tel No:

I hereby give permission for my GP to provide information to the school concerned regarding absences from the school of the following:

Name of child (ren):	Date of Birth:

I also give permission for my GP to share any relevant information in relation to my own health and welfare that is impacting on my capacity to support my child's attendance at school.

**This is given in confidence as a letter that will not be added to my child' /children's files)**

**Signed** .....  
**Date**.....

**Parent/Guardian Name:**  
.....

**Add GDPR statement about use of the info that will be provided.**

