

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Author	Liam Copley
Date of Review	7.10.24
Approved	7.10.24
New Review	01.04.2025

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

Safeguarding Policy

Missing pupils Policy

Trips and Educational Visits Policy

INTRODUCTION

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 that their child receives an education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

When parents enrol their child at Stowe and sign the School's Terms and Conditions, they agree to ensure that their child attends School regularly. This means their child must attend every day on which the school is open, except, in a small number of acceptable circumstances, such as being too unwell to attend or having prior permission for an absence from the School. It is essential for Stoics to get the most out of their school experience, including academic attainment, wellbeing, sporting achievement and wider life opportunities. For a vulnerable child, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Improving attendance for all must be a priority. The barriers to accessing education are complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual children and families.

Some children find it harder than others to attend school and, therefore, at all stages of improving attendance, Stowe School should work with Stoics and their parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, and effective practices will involve close interaction with the School's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources.

We aim to:

Promote good attendance (>95%) and reduce absence, including persistent absence (attendance <90%)

Ensure every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Act early to address patterns of absence which are detrimental to a pupil's safety and learning

Support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head and Senior Deputy Head has overall responsibility for the school's *approach to the* attendance policy, supported by the Deputy Head Pastoral, Houseparents and Heads of Year.

REGISTRATION

The Boarding nature of Stowe School means that Boarding pupils are on-site 24 hours a day during the working week in term-time. On 'out weekends' parents of boarders must inform Houseparents if the pupil is planning to leave school. Day children arrive at or before 08:00am and are encouraged to stay until 19:30 or 21:00 to take advantage of all that is on offer at School.

All Stoics are registered in their Houses at 8:00am stance. This process initially takes place on paper and is transferred by the Houseparent or Matron onto the School's management information system (iSAMS) by 09:00. Stoics who have not registered in their House by 08:15 must sign in with their matron on arrival. If they cannot find the matron they should register at North Hall reception before attending Chapel or lessons. A list of absentees is then posted onto iSAMS to which all teaching staff have access. Attendance data is stored in this electronic database.

Matrons or Houseparents will contact the parent of any Stoic who has not arrived at School that day, updating the register accordingly.

Although there is no legal requirement to keep formal registers in Boarding Houses, Stowe has taken the decision to implement a morning (08:00) and evening (19:30) registration for the Boarding Houses. In addition, staff on duty in Boarding Houses should do a final check at bedtime to ensure that all pupils are present. We also ensure that we know the whereabouts of Stoics by operating a signing-in and signing-out system in Houses and all Stoics mobile phone numbers are available on iSAMS in case they need to be contacted urgently.

Throughout the working day Stoics are registered at each lesson. In the event of an absence, the iSAMS system generates an alert to Houseparents, tutors and matrons who will establish the whereabouts of the pupil.

LATENESS

Houseparents monitor Stoics' punctuality and follow up any concerns around repeated lateness arriving at School with parents. Houseparents monitor the statistics for lateness and follow this up with parents where necessary. Houseparents will refer any concerns to the Deputy Head Pastoral / DSL if they have safeguarding or welfare concerns connected to lateness or absence.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Requests for exceptional absence (i.e. absence for days other than Religious Festivals, medical or dental appointments, or on compassionate grounds) should be sent to the Houseparent at least 48 hours in advance where possible. The Houseparent will seek advice from The Head on a case-by-case basis taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupils' parent / guardian notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We encourage parents / guardians to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is

not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. We do not expect pupils to miss an entire school day for a medical appointment, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Requests to be absent from School for university open days must be made to the Head through the Nihil Obstat system or by parental email. These will be registered onto iSAMS by the Houseparent.

A parent of a Stoic who is too unwell to attend School should email their child's Houseparent and matron before 8.00am on the first day of absence. Parents of a pupil who has been absent should, on their return to School, confirm the reason for the absence to the Houseparent in writing (email is acceptable). The School will always telephone parents or guardians in the case of an unexplained absence on the first day of absence in order to make sure that the Stoic has not suffered an accident or to understand the reason for the absence. This will be registered on iSAMS.

The School always publishes term dates over a year in advance in order that parents can arrange holidays without disrupting their children's education. **Please note that it is the School policy not to allow a holiday to be taken during term.**

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

The School understands its duty in relation to the risks posed by children missing from education. A Stoic absent from education for a prolonged period and/or on repeated occasions without explanation can be a sign that they are at risk and highlight a range of safeguarding issues. It is important that the School's response to persistent absenteeism is to prioritise support in identifying such issues, and prevent future absences. This should include not only when problems first emerge, but also where Stoics are already known to local authority children's social care or where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. The school will be proactive in supporting parents and Stoics who are missing School for any reason. The School will report to the Local Authority instances of prolonged unauthorised absence or of a Stoic being removed from the School's list under the circumstances outlined in KCSIE and, 'Children Missing Education' and, 'Working together to improve School attendance'.

The School will hold regular meetings with the parents of Stoics missing education or who are vulnerable to discuss attendance and engagement at School. Where necessary the School should identify children who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals. Ultimately, the School will support Stoics back into education following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence.

ABSENCES

The Houseparents and DSL will analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and use this analysis to facilitate discussions with Stoics, parents and senior staff. Houseparents and the DSL should conduct analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends which include analysis of pupil cohorts, and identify patterns of days of poor attendance. This analysis will be used to provide reports to Houseparents and senior staff to help devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through collected data.

Where a Stoic is missing School for long periods of time, due to ill health (both physical and mental), the Houseparent will look to communicate with parents weekly, inviting them into School for meetings at least once per half term and obtaining regular updates from healthcare and other professionals as to the status of the child. The Deputy Head Pastoral and the Head will be kept informed, as necessary, through MyConcern and invited to these meetings where necessary. In the first instance, these meetings will be to support Stoics and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance and where barriers are outside the School's control, to work together with all key partners to support the pupil and parents to access any extra support they may need voluntarily, agreeing actions or interventions. This may include referrals to external services and organisations that can provide support. Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided; this will require the School to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners. Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the School will hold more formal conversations with the parents, and the Stoic where appropriate. This may include the School's point of contact at the local authority School Attendance Support Team.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, it may be necessary for the parents to be advised to withdraw their child from the School.

The name and address of any Stoic who fails to attend School regularly or has missed School for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised will be shared with the local authority by the DSL.

As a Home Office sponsor, we are duty-bound to report unauthorised absences of sponsored pupils of 10 or more consecutive days and may withdraw sponsorship prior to this if we have reason to believe the pupil has stopped attending school. We are duty-bound to report any relevant changes in the circumstances of our sponsored pupils that may affect their student visa status.

Managing poor attendance

The School will use a variety of strategies to encourage and support good attendance.

Typically, the following school action will be used:

95-100% attendance - Houseparents to monitor and manage with support of the Head of Year
90-95% attendance - Houseparents will liaise with pupils and their parents and monitor attendance.

<90% attendance - This is defined as Persistent Absence. Houseparents will liaise with the DSL, parents, The Head and External agencies to support an improvement in attendance.

MISSING PUPILS

Introduction

The welfare of all our pupils is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school is aware that they have a responsibility for helping to always keep all Stoics safe. It is the responsibility of all staff to search actively for pupils who are missing, following the procedures identified below.

For the purposes of this policy, the term '**missing**' refers to a pupil being absent without authorisation or explanation. This policy applies to all pupils on site and during an off-site visit/trip.

Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every pupil is appropriately supervised when in our care. *Pupils are registered before school starts in the mornings and in every lesson. Absences are alerted to HouseParent, Matron and Tutor through the School's ISAMS system. A list of absentees is held on the school database.*

Missing Child (Day Pupil or Boarder) in Lessons and Activities

Staff are expected to report a pupil absent from a lesson or activity within 10 minutes of the start of a lesson. Houseparents will often know the reason for absence and whether there is any immediate cause for concern, but it is vital that unexpected absences are followed up rapidly in case a pupil has gone missing.

Pupils who have been highlighted by the DSL as having a serious mental health concern which includes self-harm, suicidal ideation and/or being a flight risk, will have a risk assessment. If absent, the member of staff in charge should alert on iSAMS and email the The Head, Senior Deputy Head, DSL, the pupil's HouseParent, Matron and Medical Centre immediately.

Missing Child in Boarding House

Staff on duty in the boarding house must be particularly vigilant over House stance at 19:30 and at bedtimes, and must follow up any absences immediately.

Sensible searching of the immediate area should be undertaken, following clues or information forthcoming from any source, including fellow pupils. Houseparents have mobile numbers for all pupils and will attempt to contact them, in the first instance. If a pupil has run away, it is not unusual for others to know this and alerting other Houseparents is a useful way of finding further information. In the first instance, the signing out book/sheet in the Boarding House should be checked.

On occasions when a staff member identifies a pupil as missing from their expected location, the procedures set out below in the Missing Pupil Procedure must be followed within an hour. Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure and all instances of a missing pupil must be reported by telephone to the Houseparent or Assistant Houseparent on duty, in the first instance and the appropriate investigations made, including contacting parents in case of an unreported medical appointment etc.

The Senior Houseparent will initiate a full inquiry and provide a written report in the pupil's file. This policy is available to all interested parties on our website and should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This documentation also complies with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding

Missing Pupil Procedure

