



We are kind - We show respect - We work hard - We are honest

Attendance Policy

Date: January 2026

Review date: January 2027

Standhill School Attendance Policy

'Where 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.'

Taken from Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities - August 2024

At Standhill Infant School our aim is to support families so that their child attends school as much as possible.

We believe that:

- School needs to be a happy, safe place that children want to attend.
- All children, regardless of additional need or disability, need to attend school regularly and on time so they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available and make the best progress possible.
- Poor attendance rates and persistent lateness puts children at an educational disadvantage.

Therefore, we aim:

- to take all reasonable steps to maximise attendance rates
- for all children to attend school as often as possible (96% or better)
- for average attendance to be 96%
- to actively discourage late arrival
- to be consistent in the application of the school's registration and attendance procedures
- to work with our families at the earliest sign of persistent lateness or absence

All staff are responsible for promoting excellent attendance and should model this by being punctual, including arriving on time to lessons and collecting pupils promptly from the playground.

The headteacher (office@standhill.notts.sch.uk) is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school.

Parental Responsibility

Parents are required to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education and are therefore primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school.

Thus, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children:

- attend school regularly
- arrive at school on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn.
- are absent only for reasons that can be authorised.

Registration

The school keeps an attendance register for each class in which pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each school session.

School registration times

The school opens at 8.40am, with registration taking place at 8.45am via SIMS. The register closes at 9.15am; after this time, any child not present will be marked absent. Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

To support a smooth and orderly start to the school day, the school gates will open at 8:00am. While every effort is made to ensure all school systems are accurately aligned with GMT/BST, the school's timekeeping system will be used as the official reference when recording lateness. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that children arrive at school on time, are collected promptly at the end of the day, or that appropriate alternative arrangements are in place.

Reporting Absence

- All absences must be called into school on the first day of the absence and any subsequent days of the absence before 8:40am. A message can be left with the child's name, class and the reason for absence, e.g. earache, cough etc., so that we can accurately record the reason on our internal registration system (SIMs). Please do not tell a teacher on the playground that a child is absent – you must contact the school office as well. Any direct communication with the class teacher regarding a pupil's absence must be passed on to the school office so that the reason can be formally logged and verified with the parent or carer. Accurate recording of attendance and absence is a legal requirement.

The following outlines how an absence should be reported to school and the school's response:

- 1. If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school office on the first day of absence, providing a reason for the absence. Any medical letters may also be shared with school. Please call each day with an update on your child's attendance and well-being.
2. Where an absence is recorded as unexplained, we will use all reasonable efforts to contact the parent by phone, email and/or in person to clarify the reason for absence.
3. If a child is absent, and there has been no message from the child's parents, the school will follow the following procedure:
Day 1
School will phone contact 1 and contact 2 if the parent has not contacted school by 9:20am. We will phone again in the afternoon.
Day 2
If we have not had contact from you and the child is still not accounted for, school will phone and email all contacts. We will use all reasonable efforts to contact you.
Day 3
If the child is still not accounted for, we will phone and email all contacts again. This will be followed by a home visit by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and another member of staff. If the child is not seen, we will deliver a letter stating the school has concerns and has tried to contact parents. The letter will state that if school does not hear from parents by 4pm then school will inform social care and ask for a welfare check by the police.
- If a parent contacts the school, or the school contacts a parent, to discuss the reason for a pupil's absence, the school may ask whether any support is required to help the child attend school, or whether there are any difficulties that need to be shared in the interests of the child's safety and attendance. Where appropriate, the school has a duty to advise parents when a child should attend school rather than be kept at home.
- The school is not required to accept reasons given for absence and may request evidence of medical or other appointments. Even where a reason or supporting evidence is provided, the school may record the absence as unauthorised if this is deemed appropriate in accordance with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and Nottinghamshire County Council.
- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The pupil's parent must notify the school by contacting the school office and provide evidence of appointments. However, we encourage parents 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.

If a child is a persistent absentee (attendance less than 90%), the school will follow guidance in [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) and the Nottinghamshire Improving Schools Toolkit.

Recording

- The absence is logged as either an authorised absence or unauthorised absence, and reasons are noted on the school database system (SIMs).
- Any absence that may be considered unauthorised should only be recorded after discussion with the headteacher. Any queries as to whether to authorise an absence or not should be referred to the headteacher.

Children missing in education

- When a child moves from our school to another the expectation is that the receiving school rings on the child's first day of attendance. We then remove the child from the school roll. If we do not receive a phone call, then we will follow up ourselves by ringing the school and/or the family. The process below would be

followed to ascertain the whereabouts of the child.

1. Phone call to first and second emergency contacts.
 2. Phone call to all contacts.
 3. Home visit by the DSL and another member of staff.
 4. Letter to parent/carer requesting they contact school.
 5. Request for the police to do a safe and well check.
 6. Notify social care.
 7. Report as a 'child missing in education' to the Local Authority.
- Children moving overseas – school will request the new address and school details before the child leaves.

Authorised and unauthorised absences and illness.

In line with guidance from the DfE and Local Authority, school will not routinely ask for all absences to be evidenced. However, we still have a responsibility to act promptly and robustly to raise attendance.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Where parents are reporting symptomatic mental health conditions (e.g. such as anxiety and stress) without a diagnosis from a medical professional, we will work in partnership with you to improve attendance and help resolve the issues causing the condition. Please note we may not be able to authorise these absences in excess of five days within a rolling 12-month period without a medical diagnosis or substantive engagement from parents/carers to resolve the issues.

A parent's health is not usually a reason for authorising a pupil's absence from school, particularly on an ongoing basis. If you are experiencing physical or mental health difficulties, we encourage you to speak to school staff in private so that we can explore how best to support you or whether you need to be signposted to an external agency e.g. Early Help.

School office staff are best able to support you in knowing whether pupils need to be absent so please speak to them if you are unsure.

Where we decide an illness is authorised we will record it as 'I' in the register. Where we decide it will not be authorised it will be recorded as an 'O' code.

Both of these codes count as absences and will impact on your child's overall attendance, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

We will monitor illnesses that are both authorised and unauthorised and, if pupils are suffering regularly from medical conditions that are not diagnosed by a medical professional, we will contact you to see if there are actions we can take to improve attendance. This may be followed up with a letter if we have concerns.

Persistent Absentees/penalty notices

Persistent absence rates are counted as anything below 90%. Under the new national framework, all schools in Nottinghamshire will be required to issue a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons (including leave of absence for a holiday in term time) even if the child's attendance is above 90%. Where absence is persistent, entrenched or involves more than one child, the situation would normally be considered as suitable for enforcement through The Magistrates Court rather than by Penalty Notice. *However*, support from the school and where appropriate external agencies will be offered to the family and a penalty notice would be a last resort (with the exception of holidays in term time).

Lateness

The school doors open at 8:40am and will be locked at 8:45am. The gates close at 8:45 a.m., at which time the register is taken.

If pupils arrive between 8.50 and 9.15am they receive a late mark **L** and need to be signed in late via the school office. They also need to let the office know what they are doing for lunch. For the afternoon session that starts at 1pm, if the child is not at school and no contact has been made by the parents the school will follow the procedure set out above.

Pupils arriving after 9.15am will sign in late at the office and receive a **U** mark which denotes 'Late after the register is closed' which counts as an **unauthorised absence**.

Afternoon registration starts at 1.00 pm and the registers are closed at 1.10 pm. Pupils arriving during the period 1.05 pm and 1.10 pm receive a late mark **L**.

Pupils arriving after 1.10 pm sign in late at the office and receive a **U** mark which denotes 'Late after the register is closed' which counts as an **unauthorised absence**.

Parents whose children regularly arrive late will receive a warning letter from school. Cases may be referred to the Family Service.

The school day ends at 3:10pm.

Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures

It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons which may be authorised:

- illness or accident in school resulting in a child going home
- medical or dental appointments

Pupils present for registration who leave early, or for part of a session, should be noted on the *Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. *The register itself is not altered.*

Pupils not present for registration who return later from an appointment should be noted on the *Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. The register is subsequently amended to authorise the absence or record an unauthorised absence.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will authorise a very restricted range of absences. These will be things such as funerals of immediate family, certain sporting events or national training or religious observations. This will require evidence so we can accurately document the reasons and be coded under a 'C' code where appropriate. We will only be able to authorise the day(s) of any ceremony/competition/training and required travel time, not any associated days in between or if you have chosen to travel over multiple days where it is not required.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations.

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is examined weekly for children who are a concern but routinely at the end of each half term to look for:

- patterns of unexplained absences
- any persistent lateness
- any prolonged absence (*Family Service may be informed if more than 5 days; note made on child's record card.*)
- any unexplained patterns of authorised absence
- attendance below 90% (including late after registration is closed) – The Family Service may be informed which could lead to prosecution.

Year on year summaries are retained for comparison and class registers are retained for a minimum of seven years.

Attendance and Punctuality Reports are given termly to governors, outlining the attendance and punctuality rates. Governors then work strategically with the school to explore the attendance/absence of specific groups and then plan steps to help improve attendance.

Children with attendance below 95% will be highlighted by staff at parents' evenings (from a list given by the office). Staff are not meant to talk in detail about attendance but should point out the impact this will have on the child's progress. If the parent wishes to discuss attendance further at parents' evening's they should make an appointment to meet with the headteacher.

An attendance email or text message will be sent to all parents at the February half-term, informing them of their

child's current attendance percentage. This is to ensure parents are aware of attendance levels and can take action to improve them if necessary.

The end-of-year report includes a section on attendance, and staff will comment where attendance is less than good or excellent, outlining any impact this may have had on the child's learning and progress.

While attendance is not statutory in Reception until the term after a child turns five, the school follows its attendance policy to establish good habits and prepare pupils for future school attendance. Please note that fines cannot be issued for absence until the term after a child's fifth birthday; however, the school reserves the right to make referrals or take further action if there are concerns about attendance.

For Autumn Term we calculate how many sessions a child would have to miss in the entire term to end with 95% (7 sessions, 3.5 days) so that a very short absence at the start of the year doesn't automatically trigger absent procedures. For the rest of the year we use percentage absence to set the threshold and send letters out as appropriate.

Actions taken when attendance/punctuality is causing concern (Excluding holidays)

Attendance is beginning to cause a concern when a child is absent for several sessions that would lead to attendance below 95%, has an identifiable pattern of absence (e.g. most Fridays), is often late (3 or more times in a half term) or attendance patterns change suddenly without explanation.

At this point a structured telephone conversation or letter (Letter 1) and a copy of the detailed attendance record will be sent home to parents to inform them of their child's current attendance and how this may impact upon their learning. This letter will be sent regardless of whether the absences are classed as authorised or unauthorised as it is only designed to ensure you are aware of poor attendance.

We will then start monitoring their attendance more closely. If there is an unusually high level of sickness/medical absence or more than six unauthorised sessions (three days) of absence within a rolling ten-week period following this letter we will issue a letter (Letter 2) warning parents' that their child's attendance needs to improve and that a penalty notice may be issued. If the absence is due to sickness/medical reasons we will also start asking for medical evidence to be provided. If medical evidence is not provided, then any future absences will be unauthorised. please note this letter will be sent as soon as three days or six sessions of unauthorised absences occur, we will not wait for the end of the ten-week period.

We will then continue to monitor the attendance and if there continues to be a high level of sickness/medical absence or a further four unauthorised sessions (two days) of absence within a rolling ten-week period a letter will be sent requesting the parents contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss their child's attendance (Letter 3).

This meeting is the chance for you to speak with the headteacher to clarify any part of the attendance process and the support available for you and your child. At this meeting, the headteacher will also discuss the reason(s) for the child's absence, whether the school can help with improving attendance in any way and the help available from the Early Help Team or other agencies and whether a referral is required. At the meeting we will also give you a letter detailing possible further actions should attendance not improve where appropriate (Letter 4).

If the you do not reply to the letter (Letter 3) at all within 10 working days, and your child's attendance continues to drop, then a further letter (Letter 3a) will be sent detailing the possible further actions that can be taken and informing you that a lack of engagement will leave the school with no option but to refer to Early Help and/or issue a penalty notice (fine) unless you contact the school as soon as possible after receipt of the letter.

If there is no contact within 5 working days after this further letter (Letter 3a), then a final letter (Letter 3b) will be sent, if there is a further 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences in a rolling 10-week period after letter 3a has been issued. This letter will notify you that the school has requested the Local Authority issue a penalty notice. If the school has sent a referral to Early Help or other agencies, then you will be informed of that either verbally or in writing.

If, at any time, there are wider concerns about the child's welfare then safeguarding procedures will be started immediately in line with our child protection policy and referrals made if appropriate.

If you reply by stating that you will not attend the meeting, but you will work on your child's attendance privately, the school may send a notice to improve and give you a final chance to improve attendance and engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

The notice to improve will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support that has been provided.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

If, at any time, there are wider concerns about the child's welfare then safeguarding procedures will be started immediately in line with our child protection policy and referrals made if appropriate.

Fixed penalty notices (Fines)

After issuing letter 3, 3a or a notice to improve, if attendance has not improved the school may issue a fixed penalty notice. The first monitoring will be 10 weeks after the issue of the warning letter (Letter 2). A fixed penalty notice will be issued as soon as 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence are recorded in a continuous 10 week. After the initial monitoring our informal monitoring will continue for the rest of the three-year rolling.

If a child ends the year with attendance below 95% we may continue to monitor them closely the following academic year if we have cause to be concerned. All children who end the year with attendance below 90% will be monitored closely from the start of the year.

Please note a ten-week monitoring period can stretch either side of a school holiday and is 10 school weeks – not including school holidays.

The first fine issued for absence will increase in cost to £160 per pupil, per parent as defined in the Education Act. This can be £80 if paid within 21 days.

If a second fine is issued within a rolling three-year period (Not academic year), the fine will be £160 per pupil, per parent and there is no reduction if it is paid promptly.

If there is a third period of absence that would have been fined within the same three-year period, the case will be referred straight to magistrate's court for prosecution – there is not an option to pay a penalty notice.

The school follows the "Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct for penalty notices issued in respect of truancy and suspension of pupils" and this is available on the local authority's website.

Incorrect reasons for absence given by parents

The school has a legal obligation to complete the register for each child accurately. To do this we rely on accurate information from parents/carers.

If the school believes that a parent/carer has given incorrect information, we are entitled to ask for evidence for that absence. If it cannot be provided, we will ask that evidence is provided for all future absences.

The most common instance of this is a parent reporting their child as being ill when they are actually on holiday, believing it will avoid a fine. If we think you have been on holiday but you have said otherwise and you cannot provide evidence to support the illness, we reserve the right not to authorise the absence and issue a fine as if the absence was an unauthorised holiday (Letter 7 will be sent to you).

Fines for holidays

The number of children being taken out of school for holidays in term-time continues to be high. We understand that the disproportionate cost of holidays during school holidays is unfair on families, but we also have a duty to ensure high attendance for all pupils.

The Department for Education has issued guidance which means school is unable to authorise any term time holidays and must issue penalty notices. When an application for holiday in term time is received it will be looked at by the headteacher. If the request is declined letter 5 will be issued. This will allow you time to amend your holiday. If you decide to take your child on holiday, then letter 6 will be issued which will outline that you have removed your child from school to attend a holiday in term time and that a Penalty Notice (fine) is going to be issued. If you do not inform us of a holiday and subsequently your child is absent from school (even if a reason is given e.g. illness) and we suspect that the absence was for the

purpose of a holiday, then letter 7 will be issued which outlines our concern and that you have an opportunity to provide us with evidence that proves that you did not go on holiday. If evidence cannot be provided, then a Penalty Notice (fine) will be issued.

Request for leave

We ask all parents/carers/wider family members to ensure they have requested and submitted a holiday/leave form **BEFORE** booking any leave. Ideally this should be submitted at least 4 weeks before you go on holiday so your request can be properly reviewed and replied to, before you start your holiday. We may ask to discuss your leave application with you if any of the following reasons apply:

- Extended leave request
- Mention of special ceremony/party
- Child concerned about holiday
- Conflicting information about the holiday

These measures form part of our schools' commitment to safeguarding pupils and preventing them missing too much school, being put in a potentially dangerous situation or undergoing outlawed practices such as Female Genital Mutilation.

Home visits

It is the policy of our school that staff conduct home visits for the following purposes:

- To see the parents and pupils we have been unable to contact
- If we have concerns for the welfare of a child
- If the absence is ongoing and there are doubts regarding the accuracy of the reason given

Home visits will not be undertaken as a long-term solution to a parent's inability to get their child to school. It is not school's responsibility to collect children from home as this is a parent's responsibility. Home visits are not undertaken alone.

Recording of communication with parents

All meetings will have notes taken and dated. Any contact with the parents regarding this matter will be noted and dated. All letters will be dated and signed and sent via email and through the post, not handed to children. All letters will be retained in the child's record and notes made on our school management system. Messages from parents may be retained for safeguarding reasons if appropriate and stored on our safeguarding system, CPOMs. If Early Help become involved the child will have a child protection file kept in accordance with the school's child protection policy and the attendance documentation may be kept in there as well.

As with all school meetings, we do not authorise any recording of meetings by parents and will take action if school staff are recorded without their consent. School will also not make or retain recordings of meetings.

Parent incentives to improve attendance

To incentivise parents to get their children to school regularly, the school may award gift vouchers. The process will be:

- Half-termly checks of attendance to register persistent absentees.
- Half-termly monitoring for these children to see if there are improvements to attendance.
- Meetings with parents and carers to see what school can do to support.
- Gift voucher rewards for families where there is an ongoing improvement in attendance.

If a child's attendance improves, then letter 8 will be sent out congratulating the parent and detailing that they are on course to receive a gift voucher.

The school also operates a whole school attendance reward system which rewards a class a week with the best attendance with a 'star' on an attendance chart. The class with the most stars and therefore the best attendance will receive a whole class reward e.g. extra play. The prize will be given to the best class at the end of each half term.

Governance and staffing

Our governors value high attendance of pupils at Standhill Infants' School and are a key part in the monitoring and challenge within school.

As part of the school's strategic use of attendance data, previous years and current attendance levels are reported to governors in each headteacher's report and discussed openly with governors. Within the report the school's attendance figures are also benchmarked against comparative schools locally, regionally and nationally. A narrative is also written in the HT report to explain the attendance and if there are particular concerns or successes to note. This narrative also benchmarks our attendance against latest national figures. Pupil Premium and SEN groups are also discussed as this can be group where attendance can be low or can be a concern.

Our governance arrangements are robust and the governing body:

- Takes an active role in attendance improvement,
- Supports our school to prioritise attendance,
- Works together with school leaders to develop our whole-school attendance culture.
- Works with school leaders to set goals and outline areas for support and challenge.

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Policy review: January 2027

Approved by: School Review Governing Body on 28th February 2026

