



Attendance Policy

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DATE FOR REVIEW: Spring 2028

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SECTION 1

Statement of Intent

Dorothy Stringer School believes that regular school attendance is essential in enabling students to achieve their full potential.

We aim to:

- Provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome by **building strong and trusting relationships** with students and their families.
- **Monitor attendance and punctuality trends** for the whole school, individual year groups, form groups and student groups. Analyse trends and take appropriate actions to make improvements.
- **Work towards consistent improvements in student attendance** with a short to medium term target of 96% average attendance across the school. Ultimately, our goal is 100% attendance for all students.
- **Work with students at risk of persistent absence**, including working with relevant external authorities where necessary, to reduce persistent absence within the school, particularly in disadvantaged and SEND student groups. We aim to return to pre-pandemic levels and **remove the disadvantage and SEND gap** between these groups and students not in those groups.
- Develop, implement, and **review whole school and bespoke systems** for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that our school uses **evidence-based best practice** to achieve our goals.
- Provide **motivational staff training** to raise attendance as a priority issue within the school. To ensure that staff are aware that **absence is a safeguarding issue which is everyone's responsibility**.
- **Work with parents/carers to help them meet their legal duty** to ensure their child attends school regularly, so they can receive a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and/or any special education need that they may have.
- Promote good attendance behaviour and **assist with the removal of barriers to attendance**. Offer early intervention support and **work with other agencies** to ensure the health and safety of our students.
- **Implement our policies to reflect inclusivity and fairness** in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Working in partnership to improve attendance

Addressing the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with families.

WE EXPECT

We promote high standards of attendance and build a culture where everyone across the school prioritises attendance improvement.



WE MONITOR

We make use of attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



WE LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When an absence pattern is identified, we discuss with students and parents/carers to understand, and address barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to improve attendance.



WE FACILITATE SUPPORT

We strive to remove barriers in school and help families to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This may involve referrals to external agencies for further support.



WE FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and support is not working or being engaged with, we work together to explain the consequences clearly to families. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.



WE ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, we enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.

SECTION 2

The law on school attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to receive a full-time education, and it is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure they receive that education. Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time, meaning that their child must attend every day that the school is open. There are a few exceptions, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) (applied from 19th August 2024)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk) (applied from 19th August 2024)

Definitions

Authorised Absence (this list is not limited to):

- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time
- Religious or cultural observances for days set aside by a religious body, for which the school has granted leave
- A family emergency, taken with the school's permission.

Unauthorised absence (this list is not limited to):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the close of registration
- Absence due to unofficial responsibilities at home
- Absence due to birthdays
- Absence due to term-time trips and holidays that have not been authorised by the school
- Leaving school without reason/the school's permission during the day

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling during the academic year, for any reason

Severe absenteeism:

Missing 50% or more of schooling during the academic year, for any reason.

SECTION 3

Parent and Carer information & involvement

The school will strive to build positive and respectful relationships with parents/carers to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with students and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance. The school will liaise with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Build positive and respectful relationships with school staff
- Engage with school support when offered
- Contact our Attendance Team for help when needed, by calling 01273 852217 or emailing attendance@dorothy-stringer.co.uk
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or if they require support getting their child to school
- Inform the school of any change of address and ensure contact details are up-to-date
- Be familiar with the attendance expectations and protocols at Dorothy Stringer School, as detailed below.

Attendance expectations at Dorothy Stringer School

Children are expected to arrive at school on time every day, and to arrive at their lessons on time throughout the day.

Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Morning registers are taken at **08.40am in form rooms**. It is recommended that students are in school by 8.30am and in their form-room by 8.35am. Students will receive a late code (L) if they are not in their form room by 8.40am.
- Students will receive an unauthorised absence U-code if they do not attend school before the morning register closes at **9.30am**.
- Any student arriving at school late must go straight to their lesson and be registered by their teacher. The exception to this is if they have attended a medical appointment, in which case they must sign in at the Attendance Office, located in Reception.
- The register for the afternoon session is taken at **1.15pm** and closes at **1.45pm**. Students will receive an unauthorised absence U-code if they do not attend school for the afternoon session.
- In addition to the above, registers are taken at the start of each lesson. If a student arrives late to any of their timetabled lessons, they will receive a late code (L).

We aim to email parents/carers approximately 30 minutes into the first lesson that a student does not register. After this we strongly advise that parent/carers monitor their child's attendance to lesson via the live register stream on the Stringer Learning Gateway (SLG).

If a student is persistently late to school, or truant lessons, parent/carers will be asked to meet with the Head of Year or Pastoral Manager to improve attendance. However, parent/carers can approach the school at any time if they are having difficulty getting their child to school on time.

Parent/carers of a student who persistently arrives to school late or truant may be issued with a fixed penalty notice in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct (See Pages 8-9).

First day absence protocols

- On the first day of absence for any reason, parents/carers must contact the school via the StudyBugs app, by emailing attendance@dorothy-stringer.co.uk or phoning 01273 852217, by 8.30am.
- The Attendance Team will check messages, emails, voicemails and school reporting systems for any notifications of student absence and will update registers with reasons for absence.
- If the school is unaware of the reason for student absence, an email will be sent to parents/carers. If parent/carers do not respond to this email, a member of staff will telephone to confirm the reason for absence. Further safeguarding action will be taken if necessary.

Sickness

If a student is too unwell to attend school, parents/carers must contact the Attendance Office as above (see First day absence protocols), and then on each school day thereafter.

Students with low-level illness are expected to attend school. The traffic light guidance below may help you decide if your child is well enough to come into school. Please also see NHS guidance here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If your child has a medical condition that could impact school attendance, please contact the Attendance Team; they may be able to offer support.

<p>Sickness & Diarrhoea</p> <p>RED – STAY AT HOME</p> <p>REPORT ILLNESS VIA THE STUDYBUG APP</p> <p>48 hours must have elapsed before a child can return to school from the last episode.</p>	<p>Headache, Feeling Sick, Stomach Ache</p> <p>AMBER – COME TO SCHOOL</p> <p>EMAIL ATTENDANCE TEAM AND/OR THE MEDICAL TEAM</p> <p>Children often feel unwell if they are anxious, if in doubt contact the school for advice.</p>	<p>Mild cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired</p> <p>GREEN – COME TO SCHOOL</p> <p>EMAIL CONCERNS TO FORM TUTOR</p> <p>We will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day</p>
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Medical and dental appointments

In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours wherever possible. If the appointment time allows, students should come to school for morning lessons and then leave later, so that less school is missed. Students should return to school straight after their appointment wherever possible.

Term time holidays and fixed penalty notices

Updated to reflect the Department for Education's new national framework for Fixed Penalty Notices which came into effect on 19 August 2024.

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child out of school during term time. The regulations prohibit Headteachers granting a leave of absence to a student, except where an application has been made in advance, and where there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Generally, the Department of Education does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. If parent/carers feel they need to take a student out of school during term time for exceptional circumstances, they must contact the Attendance Team and ask for a 'Request for Leave of Absence Form'. With the exception of emergency requests, this form should be completed and returned to the Attendance Team at Dorothy Stringer School 10 working days in advance. Any supporting evidence must be supplied at the time of application.

If a request is declined or if the school does not receive a Request for Leave Form and the student is taken out of school, we are obliged to make a referral to the Local Authority who will issue parent/carers with a fixed penalty notice. The first penalty notice issued to each parent/carer in respect of a particular student, will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If a student is taken out of school during term time without authorisation on a second occasion within a 3-year period of the first penalty notice, a second penalty notice will be issued to the same parent/carer(s) at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

If a student is taken out of school during term time without authorisation on a third occasion within a 3-year window of the first penalty notice, a third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer(s), in respect of the same student. However, alternative action can be taken, including considering prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

There is no right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued.

For any queries about the new National Framework for Fixed Penalty Notices, please refer to the ['Brighton & Hove City Council Code of Conduct for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices - Effective from 19 August 2024'](#), which is published on their website.

Other reasons for fixed penalty notices

The national threshold for triggering a fixed penalty notice is met when a student has been recorded as having had unauthorised absence for ten or more sessions (five or more school days) within a period of ten school weeks. One or a combination of the following codes count as unauthorised absence:

- G-codes (unauthorised term-time holiday)
- N-codes (no reason yet provided for absence)
- O-codes (absent in other or unknown circumstances)
- U-codes (lateness after close of registration)

The first fine is £160 per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second fine is issued to that parent/carer within a period of three school years, the fine is £160 per parent/carer per child to be paid within 28 days and there is no reduction if paid within 21 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child, within three years of the first fine being issued. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those three years, alternative action could be taken, such as prosecution.

There is no right of appeal once a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, so disputes over how an absence is classified must be settled with the school before any absence is taken.

For any queries about the new National Framework for Fixed Penalty Notices, please refer to the [‘Brighton & Hove City Council Code of Conduct for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices - Effective from 19 August 2024’](#), which is published on their website.

Religious observances

Absence can be granted on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parents/carers belong to. Parents/carers must have requested and secured permission from the school in advance.

Modelling, sporting and acting performances/activities

Parents/carers of students who hope to take part in entertainment/performances, (i.e. modelling, TV, films, theatre, etc) which require them to be absent from school, must obtain permission from the school before a child performance licence can be issued. The agent, organiser or parent/carer will usually be the person who requests the absence from the school. Further information regarding licensing legislation can be found here: [England Performance Legislation - NNCEE - National Network for Children in Employment & Entertainment](#). For more information, please visit Brighton & Hove City Council’s website: [Apply for a child performance licence \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#) or contact childperformancelicensing@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Parents/carers of students that hope to take part in sporting events must obtain permission from the school and provide documentation from the appropriate sporting body.

Young carers

Schools will provide a caring and flexible approach to support the needs of young carers, to help maintain regular attendance at school. Further support from other agencies will be sought, if appropriate.