



Sandwell Transition Education and Partnership Service

Attendance Policy

Policy Review

This policy was reviewed and approved at the Management Committee meeting held on **25.09.2025**.

The next scheduled review and renewal date is **25.09.2026**.

Introduction :

From August 2024 (Working together to improve school attendance 2024), new government rules mean all schools must follow a national approach to attendance. We will always work with families first to understand and help with any issues affecting attendance, especially where health or special needs are involved. Our goal is to support every child to attend STEPS regularly and get the most from their education.

Regular and punctual centre attendance is important. Children need to attend STEPS regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

The STEPS centre fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure children attend the centre on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. This policy models the expectations for the children and parents when the child starts their chosen school.

Our policy applies to all children 'registered' to attend the centre and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of children attend on our website and on request.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and management group together with other professionals and agencies ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from their chosen school/STEPS frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at their chosen school/STEPS, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our Centre are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve children's progress and understanding of centre protocols by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues or those whom the Centre can not accommodate.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and children of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and children.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, children, staff and governors on centre attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting children who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at the centre which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at the Centre.

Definitions

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from the centre for a legitimate reason and the centre has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the centre to explain the absence.
- Only the Centre can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from centre without the permission of the centre.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from centre without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our Centre will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and children, at interview.

- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the centre (i.e. first day calling).
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual children attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Children Missing Education (CME Team) any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to the centres initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Management Committee, when requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Leadership Team.

Responsibilities

All members of centre staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Inform (by email) the Centre Manager or Head Teacher (Leadership Group) where there are attendance concerns.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at open morning where necessary.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of Centre's attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Management Committee and SIA.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the Centre's Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence and recording these on the attendance register (as well as informing the class teacher).
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made daily.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Centre Manger/Headteacher
- Making contact with families regarding attendance
- Reporting concerns to the DSL and recording on CPOMS.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends the centre regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the centre office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the Centre in advance of any medical appointments in centre time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the centre as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to Centre so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

The centre doors open for children at 9am for a prompt start at 9.15am. This time is sufficient for all children to come into their classroom and avoid the rush hour for those traveling to the centre.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any child who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning session. Any absences must then be reported to the centre office.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.15am the only way to get into the Centre is via the Centre's office. Any child who comes into centre this way from 9.15am will be marked as late (Attendance Code L) in the attendance record. Records are kept of those children who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each child's (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for centre later than 9.15am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to centre later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a phone call from the Centre Manager/Head Teacher or a letter advising them of the concerns and will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the centre on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter or call the parent requesting these details. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If it becomes difficult to contact the parent, then members of STEPS or CME staff will be directed to attend the home address to safeguard the child.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from the centre and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. If contact cannot be made, a home visit may be arranged to safeguard the child.

Illness

When children has a known illness that means they are unable to attend the centre long term, the centre will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their work.

Where over the course of a period of time (2 weeks), a child has repeated periods of illness, the centre will contact parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Parental Request for Absence from the STEPS for a Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The centre expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Management Committee to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via a telephone conversation, if things do not improve an in person meeting shall be arranged requesting the parent to attend the centre to discuss any issues. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the Centre has a responsibility to make a referral to the Attendance and Prosecution or EME team.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Supporting attendance at STEPS – Bus Pass Policy

At STEPS we issue bus passes on a weekly basis free of charge if the family meet the distance criteria and have no personal vehicle to use.

They must live:

- Over 2 miles from the centre for Year 1,2,3 children to qualify.
- Over 3 miles from the centre for Year 4,5,6 children to qualify.
- Over 4 miles from the centre for year 7,8,9,10 or 11 children to qualify.

They may also be issued in mitigating circumstances at the Centre Manager/Head Teachers discretion.

Related Policies

This document must be read, used, and applied alongside the school policies and procedures referred to below:

- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Equality Policy and Objectives
- Accessibility Plan
- Accessibility Policy
- Admissions policy
- STEPS and LACE Bad Weather Policy
- Behaviour Regulation and Relationship Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Young Carers Policy