



**Stowe Valley**  
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

## **Stowe Valley MAT Attendance Policy**

**2025/26**

Reviewed and approved: September 2025

Next Review Date: Annual

Person responsible for overseeing the implementation: CEO and Director of Safeguarding

Chair of Trustees signature: *C. L. Chevassut*

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## **1. Policy statement**

### **Philosophy**

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system. Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on children's lives and Coten End Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. It is the policy of our school to celebrate both.

Coten End Primary School is proudly associated as being an Inclusive Attendance school. Our unwavering commitment to attendance centres around child-centric actions, evidence-informed practices, and a shared understanding of everyone's roles and collective responsibilities to promote exceptional attendance. This policy will be published on the school website and made available to parents, in accordance with DFE guidance.

## **Objectives:**

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

## **2. Definitions**

In this policy there are some key definitions which will be used, we have referenced the meaning of these terms below for ease of understanding:

**Persistent Absence** - Where a pupil's attendance figure reaches 90% or below, they are deemed as 'persistently absent' from school.

**Severe Absence** - Where a pupil is absent from school more than they are present, therefore with an attendance figure of 50% or below, they are deemed as 'severely absent'.

**Parents** - For the purpose of this policy a parent means: All natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

**Vulnerable pupils** - For the purpose of this policy vulnerable pupils are those who:

Have a social worker or previously had a social worker;

Is a Child in Care or Child Previously in Care;

Are children with an Educational Health Care Plan;

Are children who are severely absent (their attendance in school is 50% or below).

### **3. Statutory/Legal Guidance**

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 their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school<sup>1</sup>.

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.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations in 2013 only allowing Head Teachers to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in **exceptional circumstances. Holiday requests will not be granted.** Please see further details on page 12-13.

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) Aug 2024 and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (KCSiE) and Mental Health Issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for school

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<sup>1</sup> The education Act 1996, part 1, section 7. Additional legal requirements may be found in *The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006*.

## **There are many factors which can impact on a child attending school:**

### **Health and Well-being**

- Common childhood illnesses (colds, flu, infections).
- Ongoing medical conditions or hospital appointments.
- Mental health concerns such as anxiety or low confidence.

### **Family Circumstances**

- Bereavement, family illness, or caring responsibilities.
- Parental separation or family stress.
- Unstable housing or moving between homes.

### **School Environment**

- Experiences of bullying, teasing, or feeling unsafe.
- Lack of inclusion or support for children with additional needs.
- Limited engagement in lessons or school activities.

### **Practical Barriers**

- Transport difficulties, especially for families living further away.
- Poor morning routines, leading to lateness or missed days.
- Lack of school essentials (uniform, equipment, lunch).

### **Socioeconomic Factors**

- Financial pressures at home.
- Food insecurity or poor living conditions.
- Parents working irregular or long hours.

### **Learning and Academic Challenges**

- Children who find schoolwork too difficult or overwhelming.
- Pupils who are struggling to keep up may avoid attending.
- Limited support for children with special educational needs.

### **Cultural and Social Factors**

- Language barriers for families new to English.
- Cultural differences in attitudes toward schooling.
- Peer pressure from friends not valuing attendance.

### **Parental Engagement**

- Parents/carers not prioritising school attendance.

- Low awareness of the impact of absences on learning.
- Limited communication between home and school.

**If any of these are areas of concern, please use the following contact details to work with the school in supporting this:**

#### 4. Key Staff and Contacts

##### School-based contacts

Role	Contact Details
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Sheepy
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Kerry Pope
Attendance Champion (Senior Leader)	Kerry Pope
Attendance Manager	Debra Smith
School Absence reporting line	01926491329
Nominated Attendance link Governor	Emma Sims
All of the above can be contacted via the School office on 01926 491329	

##### Other useful contacts

Agency / Contact	Contact Details
Ranjit Samra- <a href="#">CEO</a> Stowe Valley Multi-Academy Trust	01926 812560 Ranjit.Samra@stowevalley.com
Samantha Godfrey- <a href="#">Director of Safeguarding</a> Stowe Valley Multi-Academy Trust	01926 812560 Godfrey.s@stowevalley.com
Warwickshire Attendance Service	01926 476600
Access to Education team	01926 736323
Children's Social Care – Family Connect Warwickshire County Council	01926 414144

## 4.1 Responsibilities

The Local Governing Board and Trust Board take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting the school to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

School Attendance Team will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Have a dedicated Senior Leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners and where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.
- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers where absence becomes persistent.
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future where there is a lack of engagement.
- Work with the Local Authority on legal intervention where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the Local Authority.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.

- Work with other schools in the local area and the Local Authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the student's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals for children with SEND and medical conditions.
- Regularly monitor data for children with SEND and medical conditions, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Inform the child's social worker, where there is one, if there are any unexplained absences and if the child's name is to be deleted from the register.
- Parents/Families with parental responsibility have a legal obligation for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Parents/Families should support the school by avoiding non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school time. Where this is not possible, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Parents/Families DO NOT have an automatic right to take their child out of the school for a holiday or any other period of extended leave during term time.
- Parents/Families should contact the school by 9.30am on each day their child is absent and where possible, indicate day of return. Parents/Families should respond promptly to absence texts received as this is a safeguarding concern and could trigger a home visit.
- Suspension from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.
- All unexplained absences will be investigated by the Attendance Team and Parents/Families will be kept informed about any attendance concerns.
- Parents/Families should attend meetings about their child's attendance and support the school in responding to concerns regarding attendance.

#### Pupils:

- Pupils are expected to arrive to school site no later than 8.50am.
- We ask that pupils are resilient and attend school regularly. Our school expectation is always no more than 3 days missed per school year.
- We encourage pupils to communicate with parents/families, Class teacher, Phase Leader or a trusted adult if there is an issue that is making them not want to come to school so that the school can provide support and advice.
- Pupils are expected to remain in the school all day and will not be allowed to leave the school site without permission.

#### Recording Absence and Attendance:

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department of Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.



## **5. Safeguarding**

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Absence can be an indicator of abuse, neglect and exploitation and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children. As per Keeping children safe in Education 2025, children who are persistently absent from education or missing in education are more vulnerable to safeguarding concerns.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if their numbers change.

Coten End Primary School recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence as it will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm.

Coten End Primary School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school and evidence of absences may be requested, such as medical evidence where applicable

### **5.2 Children missing education and Children absent from education**

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education leaders have ensured that:

1. Staff understand what to do when children do not attend regularly, causing the child to be 'absent from education'.
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education or are absent from education (especially on repeat occasions) are in place.
3. Staff know that travelling to conflict zones could be an indicator of FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures are in place to ensure that we always inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll or when they:
  - a. leave the school to be home educated
  - b. move away from the school location
  - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start

date.

Staff will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the Local Authority, particularly where children are missing from education, are absent on repeated occasions and/or are absent for periods during the school day.

Coten End Primary School is required to inform the local authority where a pupil is absent for **10 days and the reasons are not known and/or coded as unauthorised** (G, N, O, and/or U). The school attendance team will work with the family.

### **5.3 Vulnerable Pupils**

Coten End Primary School routinely monitors the attendance of vulnerable pupils. If we have concerns about a pupil, we work closely with outside agencies to ensure parents understand the importance of good attendance and attendance procedures. There are a number of ways we may<sup>2</sup> monitor the attendance of vulnerable pupils in addition to the universal daily process of monitoring attendance for all:

- a. Vulnerable pupils are included on the school internal monitoring list, the attendance of these pupils is monitored on a weekly basis and absences are reported to the appropriate staff member immediately and contact is made with parents/carers as needed.
- b. Daily school contact from the attendance team to parents/carers (and any external professionals such as social workers) for absences of vulnerable pupils or those at risk of persistent or severe absence.
- c. Dual Registration – Coten End Primary School maintains its responsibility to ensure that pupils who are dual registered are attending each day and progressing with their education.
- d. SEND –Pupils who have special education needs or disabilities who are poor attenders are monitored through regular meetings, attendance is discussed and tracked and interventions are put into place by senior leaders.
- e. Severely Absent Pupils - Pupils who are severely absent are assigned an attendance case manager who makes regular contact with the child and family to support them in removing the barriers to attendance and engage them back into school. All contact and agreed interventions are robustly recorded and the impact is monitored regularly.

## **6. Day to Day Attendance Procedures**

### **6.1 Registers**

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and after lunchtime. It will mark using the national attendance codes from the School attendance (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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<sup>2</sup> The way in which we monitor a vulnerable student will be on a case by case basis and these decisions are regularly reviewed between the attendance, safeguarding and pastoral teams in school.

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:50am and ends at 3:15pm (Reception/KS1) / 3:20pm (KS2)

Pupils must arrive in school between **8:40am and 8:50am** on each school day.

The DSL notifies Children's Social Care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two consecutive days without explanation.

The school will continue to take all reasonable steps to see the absent child and gather a reasonable absence. This may include working with relevant external agencies in the best interest of the child.

## **6.2 Absence and Punctuality**

Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible to inform us if a child is to be absent or late on **EACH** day that the child is eligible to attend.

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office, via phone 01926 491329, email (cot-admin@stowevalley.com) or using the school app (My Child at School).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### Planned Absence/ Leave of Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by completing the appropriate form. Appendix 2 – Application for pupil to be absent during the school day. This can also be found on the school website and outside the school office.

However, we strongly 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school will monitor punctuality and will contact parents to discuss any ongoing punctuality issues.

### Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the family home
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a targeted support officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate.

If a pupil has an explained absence **from school for more than 5 consecutive days**, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, the absence will automatically be unauthorised and the school will arrange a meeting that day (or as close as possible) with parents to discuss the reason for absence and support them in overcoming any barriers to attendance. A home visit may also be conducted on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of an explained absence in order to ensure our safeguarding duties are fulfilled. Where applicable medical evidence for an ongoing absence **may** be requested. Where there is long term explained absence the school will still continue to keep contact with the child through various means, such as home visits, online meetings or through an external professional. This will ensure the school can maintain their duty to safeguard and promote welfare of all children within the school and ensure the child has the relevant people working with them and the family.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through MCAS (school app), parents' evening meetings and also on mid-year and end of year reports. Support will be provided to parents of pupils who are finding it difficult to attend school.

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/school-attendance-exclusions/school-attendance-guidance-parentscarers/6>

## **7. Leave of Absence**

- The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

### Expectations

- A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Permission for a Leave of Absence from a school may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an authorised person).
- Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.
- Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head Teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify the parents of their decision. The school may also

request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.

- It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent, i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Where applications for Leave of Absences are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an “unauthorised” absence. Where a leave of absence is requested but additional days take either prior to or after the request, they may be considered as part of the leave of absence.
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as ‘unauthorised’.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council’s Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings. A copy of which can be found at [WCC FPN code of conduct](#)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence from this date will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.**

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).

- First Leave of Absence Offence: The amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Leave of Absence Offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice). A Penalty Notice will not be issued and the matter will be referred to

Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

## **8. Attendance Intervention**

In line with the DfE statutory guidance we offer a supportive attendance process, which we also refer to as connection, based on a relational, needs led, stepped approach. Our school offers a welcoming ethos with high expectations for all. We will assess data to identify absence trends and use preventative meetings/discussions with families to listen, understand, support and remove barriers. Where needed we will formalise support to nurture improvement with strategies such as attendance contracts. As a last resort we will consider intensifying support and/or enforce legal sanctions.

### **8.1 Promoting Attendance**

- Punctuality and persistent absence issues will be followed up with parents.
- Persistent lateness in collecting children will be followed up with parents.
- There is daily contact between parents and the school when a child is absent.
- There is clear guidance on authorised and unauthorised absence.
- There are processes for the re-integration of pupils who have had an extended absence.
- School may liaise with the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) concerning pupils with emerging attendance problems where attendance has fallen below 90% - attendance is reported on termly to the Headteacher or more frequently if a concern has been raised.
- Mid-year and annual reports to parents include a record of their child's attendance.
- The Headteacher's termly report to Governors records the attendance figures for the academic year to date.
- The Safeguarding Governor will monitor attendance every half term.
- The school uses all communication options to inform parents of attendance information in school documentation e.g. the prospectus, parents' evening, reports.
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance.