

Struthers Primary & Early Years Centre



PUPIL ATTENDANCE

&

ABSENCE POLICY

October 2023



Flourish



Achieve



Belong

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed in accordance with South Ayrshire's Management Guidelines on School Attendance and Absence. Our overall aim is to ensure consistency when reporting and monitoring pupil attendance and absences.

'Last session in South Ayrshire Primary schools, just over 37,000 days (the equivalent of over 220,000 teaching hours!) were lost to unauthorised absence.

*Poor attendance has been linked to lower levels of attainment, peer relationships, emotional and behavioural difficulties and poorer employment opportunities, which is why we want to see **Every Learner Every Day!*** (South Ayrshire Inclusion Team)

Education Scotland - Promoting Attendance Key Principles:

- All children and young people have a right to education; and education authorities have a duty to provide education
- All children and young people have the right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education and fulfil their potential.
- All children and young people need to be included, engaged and involved in their learning. Children and young people should be given opportunities to fully engage and participate in the life of their school in order to encourage good attendance.
- Educational settings should actively engage with parents to try to ensure that any barriers to good attendance are removed.
- Educational settings and partners should work collaboratively to promote and support good attendance.
- The foundation for learning establishments and education authorities is a focus on positive relationships and an inclusive ethos and culture that promotes good attendance. Attendance should not be considered in isolation.

This policy also links with our Rights Respecting School ethos under the following UNCRC Articles:

- [Article 3](#) (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- [Article 5](#) (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities) Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.
- [Article 18](#) (parental responsibilities and state assistance) Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.
- [Article 28](#) (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this
- [Article 31](#) (leisure, play and culture) Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Recording and Monitoring of Absence and Latecoming

The role of the parent/carer:

- If you are aware in advance that your child will be absent from school on a particular day/date please notify our school office by phone or in writing.
- If your child is unwell and is unable to come in to school without advance notice parents/carers must contact the school office before 9.30am on the day of their absence.

The role of the Class Teacher:

- Notify the school Admin Office of any pupil absence before 9.30am

The role of the clerical Assistant:

- Where the school does not receive a call the clerical team will attempt to make contact with parents and listed emergency contacts for the pupil.
- Log all daily absences in SEEMiS
- Monthly absences report generated and shared with HT.

The role of the Head Teacher / Depute Head Teacher:

- If no contact can be made and the school has concerns, social work may be contacted and/or a home visit arranged
- When attendance due to unauthorised absence falls below 90% an initial letter will be sent home to the parent/carer (Appendix 1)
- If no improvement in attendance after letter 1 and/or no response from parent/carer, after a period of 2 weeks letter 2 will be sent. This letter will request that the parent/carer makes an appointment with the school (Appendix 2)
- If no improvement in attendance after letter 2 and/or no response from parent/carer, after a period of 2 weeks letter 3 will be sent. This will state a day/time to meet with someone from the SLT. The outcome of this meeting will identify actions that will improve attendance (Appendix 3)
- If the parent/carer fails to attend meetings or contact the school a final warning letter will be sent (Appendix 4).

Authorised Absence

Any member of the Senior Leadership Team may authorise a pupil absence if they are satisfied by the reason provided. This must be provided either in writing or over the phone prior to the absence. Reasons for authorised absence can include:

- Illness where no learning provision is made
- Any openings where it has been agreed that the child/young person should not attend school i.e part-time timetable
- Court appearances

- Attendance at, or in connection with, a Children's Hearing or care review
- Religious observance
- Bereavement
- Weddings or Funerals of close friends and family
- Participation in non-school debates, sports, music or drama activities
- Family holidays agreed by the school to be taken in exceptional circumstances
- Medical and dental appointments
- Period of exclusion

Unauthorised Absence

Schools must record absence as unauthorised when there is no reason for absence provided or they are not satisfied with the reason provided. Such absence is likely to include:

- Family holidays during term-time
- Absence with parental awareness
- Occasional absence without parental awareness
- Longer-term absence
- Absence relating to substance and alcohol misuse

Family Holidays During Term Time

Children and young people who are absent from school due to a holiday in term time miss out on important learning.

Family holidays taken during term-time will be recorded as unauthorised absences, except in exceptional circumstances. The fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time is not an exceptional circumstance and the Head Teacher will not authorise this.

Exceptional circumstances are much more likely to be unique and/or one off situations, for example:

- Where a family needs time together to recover from a bereavement
- Where a parent/carers employment is of a nature where leave cannot be accommodated within school holidays
- Where a parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill
- Where there may have been significant trauma in the family

These are not exhaustive but merely serve as examples. The HT or member of the SLT will judge when exceptional circumstances apply on an individual basis and authorise accordingly.

Long-term Absence

School related issues –

Children and young people may be absent from school for a number of reasons. For some it is an expression of unhappiness with life in the school, which may have a number of causes:

- Struggling with learning
- Conflict with, or fear of, a teacher or teachers, or other pupils
- Bullying
- Issues relating to social media
- Social and emotional needs and concerns relating to mental health
- Anxiety about school
- Feeling stigmatised
- Services (e.g Social Work) during school time.

It is essential to identify any underlying causes of absence and take action to resolve these. It is the role of the Pupil Support Coordinator in the school to work together with staff, partners, parents/carers and pupils to identify and support individual needs.

Home and Wider community issues–

For some children, their unhappiness may be linked to other issues, such as:

- Challenging family circumstances
- Coping with adversity or trauma
- Worries about parents, siblings or people close to them
- Experience of care
- Experience of abuse or neglect
- Anxiety/mental health issues
- Substance or alcohol misuse

Additional Support for Learning

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 requires education and authorities and other agencies to make provision for all pupils who require additional support to overcome barriers to their learning. Additional support may be required to overcome needs arising from their learning environment, disability or health, family circumstances or social and emotional factors which would include mental health concerns.

Providing additional support may help children and young people to engage more fully with school and promote good attendance.

As a school we recognise that poor attendance can often be related to, or be an indication of, and additional support need and we would therefore use our Staged Intervention processes to ensure that barriers to learning are identified and support is provided.

Looked After/Care Experienced Pupils

Children who are looked after and/or care experienced can be particularly vulnerable and as a school we are especially vigilant with this group of children.

Where a child is looked after or where there is Social Work involvement on a voluntary basis, the allocated Social Worker will be informed at once of any concerns relating to the child, including non-attendance and truancy from school.

Persistent non-attendance or lateness may be an indicator of other concerns. These concerns will be automatically shared with our school's Named Person, Designated Manager and Lead Professional (Social Worker). If necessary a review meeting arranged and information shared on AYRSHARE.

APPENDIX 1

People Directorate

Director: Lyndsay McRoberts



Acting Head Teacher: Laura Clark

Struthers Primary School
15a Staffin Road, Troon
KA10 7JB
Tel: 01292 690073
Email: Struthers.Mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
Our Ref: LC/
Date:

Dear

PUPIL FORENAME, SURNAME, CLASS

Keeping children and young people safe and in school is a high priority for South Ayrshire Council.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and our partner agencies to ensure all children benefit from an education that maximises the opportunity to achieve their full potential at school, in further education, training or employment.

School staff have the responsibility to monitor and record absence, interacting proactively with children and their families to promote good attendance and time keeping, in line with council policy.

I am required to draw your attention to (PUPIL NAME) attendance as it has recently fallen below 90%/or late-coming has increased and they have now been late XX number of times. Whilst you may have notified the school that (PUPIL NAME) would be absent/late, I have the responsibility to impress upon you the impact of absence/late-coming on achievement and attainment.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and supporting (PUPIL'S NAME) education. We are confident that by working together we will see an improvement in your child's attendance/late-coming.

I would encourage you to contact the school to discuss matters further.

Yours sincerely

Laura Clark

Acting Head Teacher

Enc. Attendance Printout
Code List

APPENDIX 2

People Directorate

Director: Lyndsay McRoberts



Acting Head Teacher: Laura Clark

Struthers Primary School
15a Staffin Road, Troon
KA10 7JB
Tel: 01292 690073
Email: Struthers.Mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
Our Ref: LC/
Date:

Dear

PUPIL FORENAME, SURNAME, CLASS

Keeping children and young people safe and in school is a high priority for South Ayrshire Council.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and our partner agencies to ensure all children benefit from an education that maximises the opportunity to achieve their full potential at school, in further education, training or employment.

Struthers Primary places great emphasis on good attendance and timekeeping. Despite my previous letter to you on DATE. (PUPIL FORENAME) absence/late-coming from/to school remains excessive.

Excessive absence/late-coming from/to school will severely impact on the progress which (PUPIL FORENAME) will be able to make and I hoped that improvement would be evident. Unfortunately, the attached printout(s) for this and previous sessions (where appropriate) indicates that problems still exist.

I must remind you that it is a legal requirement under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 that parents/carers ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis. Clearly this requirement is not being met.

I would therefore ask that you contact the school to make an appointment with (MANAGEMENT) to discuss (PUPIL NAME's) continued absence from school.

Yours sincerely

Laura Clark

Acting Head Teacher

Enc. Attendance Printout
Code List

APPENDIX 3

People Directorate

Director: Lyndsay McRoberts



Acting Head Teacher: Laura Clark

Struthers Primary School
15a Staffin Road, Troon
KA10 7JB
Tel: 01292 690073
Email: Struthers.Mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
Our Ref: LC/
Date:

Dear

FORMAL ATTENDANCE REVIEW MEETING - PUPIL FORENAME, SURNAME, CLASS

Keeping children and young people safe and in school is a high priority for South Ayrshire Council.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and our partner agencies to ensure all children benefit from an education that maximises the opportunity to achieve their full potential at school, in further education, training or employment.

Struthers Primary places great emphasis on good attendance and timekeeping. Despite my previous letter to you on DATE of First Letter and DATE of Second Letter (PUPIL FORENAME's) absence from school remains excessive.

Excessive absence/late-coming from/to school will severely impact on the progress which (PUPIL FORENAME) will be able to make and I hoped that improvement would be evident. Unfortunately, the attached printout(s) for this and previous sessions (where appropriate) indicates that problems still exist.

I must remind you that it is a legal requirement under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 that parents/carers ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis. Clearly this requirement is not being met.

A meeting has been arranged at the school on Day Date at Time with Name of Appropriate Member(s) of Staff to discuss the matter. I would be grateful if you would contact Name of Appropriate Member of Staff to confirm that you will be able to attend.

Yours sincerely

Laura Clark

Acting Head Teacher

Enc. Attendance Printout
Code List

APPENDIX 4

People Directorate

Director: Lyndsay McRoberts



Acting Head Teacher: Laura Clark

Struthers Primary School
15a Staffin Road, Troon
KA10 7JB
Tel: 01292 690073
Email: Struthers.Mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
Our Ref: LC/
Date:

Dear

PUPIL FORENAME, SURNAME, CLASS

Keeping children and young people safe and in school is a high priority for South Ayrshire Council.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and our partner agencies to ensure all children benefit from an education that maximises the opportunity to achieve their full potential at school, in further education, training or employment.

Despite our previous correspondence, the attendance of your child has not improved.

(PUPIL FORENAME's) attendance falls well below what is required for progress in school. I now, therefore remind you of your legal duty under Education (Scotland) Act 1980 Section 30. This states that:

“Every parent or carer of a child of school-age has a duty to ensure that the child receives education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability”.

This duty is fulfilled by the parent or carer making sure that the child attends school regularly.

The education authority has a legal responsibility to enforce school attendance. As a result of the level to which **(PUPIL FORENAME's)** attendance has fallen, a referral has been made to the Local Attendance Council who will now monitor **(PUPIL FORENAME's)** attendance. The Attendance Council have the authority to recommend that a child/young person be made the subject of an Attendance Order. Parents will be in a breach of the Attendance Order if the child/young person fails to attend school without a reasonable excuse. The parents can then be referred to the Sheriff Court to be prosecuted. The Clerk to the Attendance Council will write to you with more details.

Yours sincerely

Laura Clark

Acting Head Teacher

Enc. Attendance Printout
Code List