

Attendance policy



STUDFALL JUNIOR ACADEMY

Approved by:	Louise McGeachie	Date: 3 rd Feb 2026
Last reviewed on:		
Next review due by:	Feb 2027	

Studfall Junior Academy – Attendance Policy (Statutory 2024)

Approved by: Louise McGeachie Date: 3rd Feb 2026

Reviewed: This policy replaces the 2022 version and aligns to the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (effective from 19 August 2024) and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. It should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education.

1. Purpose and scope

Studfall Junior Academy is committed to securing high attendance for every pupil as part of our safeguarding duty and our commitment to inclusion. Improving attendance is everyone's business. We will work in partnership with pupils, parents and local partners to identify and remove barriers to attendance early ('support-first') and only use legal intervention as a last resort.

2. Statutory framework and guidance

This policy has regard to:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, statutory from 19 August 2024)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (including electronic attendance and admission registers, revised codes, and data access/sharing)
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 – National Framework for penalty notices
- Education Acts 1996 and 2002, and related statutory guidance (children missing education; supporting pupils with medical conditions; education for children with health needs who cannot attend school; suspensions and exclusions; alternative provision; KCSIE)

3. Roles and responsibilities

All staff promote good attendance and punctuality. Specific roles are:

Parents/carers:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open, on time, properly equipped.
- Notify the Academy of absence on each day by 9:30am and provide reasons/evidence when requested.
- Provide more than one emergency contact and keep details up to date.

Pupils:

- Attend punctually and be ready to learn.

Class teachers:

- Complete registers accurately at 9:00am (open until 9:15am) and 1:10pm (open until 1:25pm).
- Promote attendance and follow up concerns with the Attendance Officer.

Attendance Officer (Joanna Hankins):

- Monitor and analyse attendance daily and weekly; code absences accurately by 9:30am and 1:30pm.
- First-day response, follow-up calls, letters and coordination of support; escalate concerns to the Senior Attendance Champion.

Senior Attendance Champion (Louise McGeachie):

- Lead on attendance strategy and culture; oversee analysis; hold Targeted Support Meetings with families; coordinate multi-agency support.

Principal:

- Ensure implementation; monitor impact; report to trust/governing body; authorise leaves of absence; liaise with LA regarding legal intervention.

Governing Body/Trust:

- Review attendance data at least termly; challenge trends; ensure staff training; approve this policy and any updates.

Local Authority (School Attendance Support Team):

- Provide advice and early help; attend Targeted Support Meetings; consider formal/legal intervention in line with the National Framework.

4. Promoting attendance and early help ('support-first')

We promote attendance through a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment and clear routines. Where patterns of absence emerge or a pupil is at risk of persistent (<90%) or severe (<50%) absence, we will:

- Send an informative nudge letter to parents when attendance falls below 97%, if attendance does not improve a formal attendance letter will be sent out offering the support of the school nursing team, learning mentor or SENDCO support. Attendance target will be the next stage where parents will be offered an Early Help Assessment.
- Meetings with the pupil and parents at an attendance support meeting to understand barriers; agree a written plan and reasonable adjustments.
- Provide targeted support (breakfast club places, mentoring, curriculum or timetable adjustments, referrals to health/SEND/Early Help).
- Hold Targeted Support Meetings with the family and, where appropriate, LA partners to review progress and coordinate multi-agency support.
- Where voluntary support is not working or not engaged with, formalise support via an Attendance Contract or consider an Education Supervision Order (with the LA).

Attendance assemblies are held every half term to encourage good attendance. Certificates and prizes are presented to pupils during assemblies for good attendance and for best class improved attendance.

5. School day, punctuality and first-day response

Pupils must arrive by 8:50am. Morning register is taken at 9:00am (open until 9:15am). Afternoon register at 1:10pm (open until 1:25pm). Arrivals after the register closes are recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session.

Parents/carers must contact the Academy on each day of absence by 9:30am via 01536 202621 or admin@studfalljunioracademy.org. First-day response will be made for any unexplained absence; where we cannot contact emergency contacts and have safeguarding concerns, we may conduct a home visit and/or request a police welfare check.

6. Registers and coding (electronic)

The Academy keeps electronic admission and attendance registers. Every session records whether a pupil is present; attending approved off-site education; absent (authorised/unauthorised); or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. We use the DfE's 2024 attendance codes and follow the updated guidance (including clarifications to codes E, Q, Y6, Y7 and the statistical use of sub-codes such as C2). Registers are retained in line with statutory requirements.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Principal may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and will determine the number of days authorised. Term-time holidays are not exceptional and will not be authorised, including requests based on parental work patterns.

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the 'Leave of Absence' form which can be obtained at the Academy office. The Principal will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time.

Medical/dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours where possible; where unavoidable, parents should provide appointment evidence and the pupil should be absent for the minimum time necessary. Where illness is cited and authenticity is in doubt, medical evidence may be requested; absence may be unauthorised if evidence is not provided.

8. Legal intervention – National Framework (from 19 Aug 2024)

Where support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with (or where support is not appropriate, e.g., term-time holidays), the Local Authority may consider legal intervention. Under the National Framework:

- National threshold: typically 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10 school-week period triggers consideration of legal intervention.
- Penalty notice amounts: first notice £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days); second notice within 3 years if paid within 28 days £160 (no discount); further offences the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court fines can be up to £2500 per parent per child.

- Decisions are taken by the LA and applied consistently; local codes of conduct do not override the national framework.

9. Children with health needs, SEND and vulnerable pupils

We make reasonable adjustments and provide additional support for pupils with SEND and/or physical or mental health needs (including medically-related reduced timetables). We work with health and SEND services, and ensure reintegration plans for pupils returning to school. Children with a social worker are closely monitored and supported, with information shared appropriately including with Youth Offending Teams where relevant.

10. Data, monitoring and governance

Attendance data is monitored daily, weekly and half-termly. Governors/trustees receive regular reports and challenge trends. Data is shared with the LA/DfE as required by law. Impact of interventions is evaluated and adapted.

11. Communication with families

We communicate attendance expectations clearly and consistently, using letters/texts/meetings. Parents are regularly informed of their child's attendance (at least half-termly).

12. Review and publication

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if DfE guidance changes, approved by the governing body/trust, and published on our website.