

Stalham High School Attendance Expectations

JARGON BUSTER

OVERALL ATTENDANCE = how much of school your child has attended (e.g. your overall attendance is 98.3%).

PERSISTENT ABSENCE = your child's attendance is only 90% or under and needs to improve.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE = the school agrees that your child needed to be off school these days.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE = the school does not agree that your child should be off school these days.

96% or better overall attendance

- Your child is meeting or exceeding the school's attendance target!
- Your child will receive merits in school to recognise their achievement, a prize at the end of the term and could qualify for a rewards trip at the end of the academic year.

95.99% or lower overall attendance

- Your child has fallen below the school's attendance target (96% or better).
- Your child is missing, on average, 1 lesson per week (or 39 lessons over a whole year).
- At the end of a half term a letter will be sent to parents to remind families of their current attendance and the school target.

We understand that this can seem imposing and, sometimes at this point, families will feel there was nothing they could do about the attendance (due to illness, etc.) Remember, the letter is just a reminder of how much the school values attendance.

93% or lower overall attendance

- Your child's attendance is significantly low.
- You may receive a letter requesting an informal meeting with the school Attendance Team.
- It is important that you attend any meetings offered at this point so the family and school can work together to identify how attendance can be improved and help your child catch up on missed learning.
- Evidence for absences will always be required from this point onward.
- All absences hereafter will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher.
- We work together at this point to make sure your child avoids dropping below the next threshold (90%).

It is important at this stage to appreciate that we are working together to avoid 90% or less attendance. If this should happen, evidence for absences and evidence of working with the school are vital for proving your commitment to your child's attendance and avoiding any penalties or fines which may be incurred if attendance drops any further.

90% or lower overall attendance

- Your child is now classed as "persistently absent" from school.
- Your child is now missing, on average, 2 and a half lessons per week (or 97 and a half lessons over a whole year).
- We may consult with the Local Authority to support our monitoring of your child's attendance together with the school Attendance Team.
- You will be sent a letter inviting you to attend a formal panel meeting to support your family.
- Your child's attendance will now be closely monitored every week.

At this point, it is vital to work together to help show significant improvement in attendance to avoid Fast Track procedures from Norfolk County Council. There is a real danger of parents being prosecuted and incurring fines or penalties if attendance isn't improved quickly once the Fast Track meetings are started.

IF ATTENDANCE IS NOT IMPROVED

- You will be asked to attend a Fast Track meeting at the school, even if you refuse to attend the meeting will take place and a formal record will be submitted regardless.
- Your child's attendance will be closely monitored every day.
- If your child's attendance does not significantly improve, this could now lead directly to parents being prosecuted. It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school.

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IF YOUR CHILD IS UNEXPECTEDLY GOING TO MISS SCHOOL (e.g. ILLNESS, FAMILY EMERGENCY etc.) YOU MUST:

- **Phone the school and leave a message on the absence line (01692 580281 then option 1) or email the Attendance Officer, Mrs Sutton – lsutton@stalhamhigh.co.uk and give the reason for the absence. This must be done on the first day your child is off, first thing in the morning.** On the third day of absence the parent/carer should contact the school again to give an update.

IF YOU ARE PLANNING FOR YOUR CHILD TO MISS SCHOOL (e.g. HOSPITAL APPOINTMENT, FUNERAL etc.) YOU MUST:

- **Phone the school, or email the Attendance Officer to request a Leave of Absence Request Form. Alternatively, you can write a letter to the Headteacher (signed and dated) to notify the school as to why your child will be unable to attend school in the future and on what date/s. This must be done as soon as you are aware of the need for absence. We will notify you ASAP of the decision.** We advise all parents to try and avoid arranging medical appointments during the school day, as this will have a negative effect on a student's attendance percentage. We also request that parents consider making medical appointments at times that mean a student attends at least one of the registration periods within a school day (AM/PM).

REQUESTING AUTHORISED ABSENCE FOR HOLIDAYS DURING SCHOOL TERM TIME:

- **Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance, in writing (green form available from reception as above). The head teacher or designated other must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts of each case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school and inform you in writing. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.**

The Attendance Team

Mrs Sutton – Mrs Sutton is our Attendance Assistant and oversees student attendance on a day-to-day basis.

Ms Beck – Ms Beck is our Inclusion Manager and is responsible for monitoring persistent absences. Ms Beck and Mrs Sutton will arrange and attend any necessary Panel and/or Fast Track meetings.

Ms Lessells – Ms Lessells is one of our Student Managers and is also responsible for monitoring persistent absences.

Mr McMahon – Mr McMahon is our Assistant Headteacher with overall responsibility for attendance.

