Studfall Infant and Nursery Academy – Attendance Policy

Approved by: Louise McGeachie Date: October 2026

Reviewed: This policy 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 Infant 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 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 9:20am) and 1:05pm (open until 1:25pm).

• Promote attendance and follow up concerns with the Attendance Officer.

Attendance Officer – Shannon Alexander (salexander@studfallinfantacademy.org)

• Monitor and analyse attendance daily to ensure attendance registers are completed and attendance codes are applied in accordance with DfE guidance

• First-day response, follow-up calls, letters and coordination of support; escalate concerns to the Senior Attendance Champion.

• The school promotes good attendance through regular encouragement, praise and appropriate rewards, recognising both excellent attendance and sustained improvement.

• Attendance data will be regularly analysed to identify pupils and groups requiring additional support, enabling the school to target attendance improvement efforts effectively and measure the impact of interventions.

Senior Attendance Champion: Karen Parris (kparris@studfallinfantacademy.org)

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

Executive Principal: Louise McGeachie (lmcgeachie@studfalljunioracademy.org)

• 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:

• Meet with the pupil and parents to understand barriers; agree with a written plan and reasonable adjustments.

• Provide targeted support (breakfast club places, mentoring, curriculum or timetable adjustments, referrals to health/SEND/Family 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).

5. Early years attendance

Whilst nursery attendance is not statutory, the Academy believes regular attendance is essential in establishing routines and supporting children's early learning and development. Nursery attendance will therefore be monitored and promoted using the same supportive principles within this policy.

6. School day, punctuality and first-day response

Pupils must arrive by 8:55am. Morning register is taken at 9:00am (open until 9:20am). Afternoon register at 1:05pm (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 264540 or admin@studfallInfantacademy.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.

7. Registers and coding (electronic)

The Academy keeps electronic admission and attendance registers. Every session record 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.

8. 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. Parents/carers must request leave of absence in advance and provide supporting evidence where required.

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.

9. Child Missing in Education (CME)

Where a pupil fails to attend regularly, leaves school without notification, or their whereabouts become unknown, the Academy will follow Children Missing Education procedures and notify the Local Authority as required.

10. Elective Home Education

Parents wishing to electively home educate their child should notify the Academy in writing. The Academy will follow Local Authority procedures and ensure parents receive information regarding their responsibilities before removal from roll is considered.

11. 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 (5 days a - day is two sessions) within a rolling 10 school-week period triggers consideration of legal intervention.

• Penalty notice amounts: first PN in a 3-year period is £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days); a second PN in a 3-year period is £160 with no discount; subsequent offences may proceed to prosecution without a further PN.

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

12. 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.

We work closely with parents to ensure all needs are met; to support this, provision could be supported by a reduced timetable. This will only be used after consultation with parents and school.

We will ensure that the arrangements are

- Agreed with parents.
- Reviewed regularly.
- Used only where in the child's best interests.
- Supported by a reintegration plan.

Where a reduced timetable has been arranged, school will monitor and review with parents, notifying the local Authority, keeping them informed of progress and arrangements.

The school's intention is that any reduced timetable remains temporary and the pupil is supported to return to full-time education as quickly as is appropriate for their individual needs.

The Academy routinely analyses attendance by pupil group, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, children with a social worker, young carers, and pupils from minority groups. Where disparities are identified, targeted support and intervention will be implemented.

Where a pupil has been absent due to health needs, SEND, complex attendance barriers or prolonged unavoidable absence, the academy may implement a short-term phased return to support a gradual increase in attendance, with the expectation of a return to full-time education as soon as appropriate.

13. Data, monitoring and governance

Attendance data is monitored daily, weekly and half-termly. Trustees receive regular reports and challenge trends at a trust level. Data is shared with the LA/DfE as required by law. The impact of interventions is evaluated and adapted.

14. Communication with families

We communicate attendance expectations clearly and consistently, using letters/texts/meetings. Parents are regularly informed of their child's attendance and is discussed at parents evening if appropriate.

15. 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.