



Community College

# Stoke Damerel Community College

## **Attendance Policy**

Stoke Damerel Community College is part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust.  
The Greenshaw Learning Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales,  
company number 7633694, registered at Greenshaw Learning Trust, Grennell Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 3DY.

# Stoke Damerel Community College

## Attendance Policy

**Date: May 2022**

This Attendance Policy applies to Stoke Damerel Community College, and all governors and staff of the school must abide by this policy which has been adopted in accordance with and pursuant to the Student Welfare Policy of the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

It is the responsibility of the local governing body and Headteacher of the school to ensure that their school and its staff adhere to this policy. In implementing this policy school staff must take account of any advice given to them by the Executive Headteacher and/or Board of Trustees.

This policy is subject to the GLT Student Welfare Policy and the Scheme of Delegation approved for the school. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the GLT Student Welfare Policy and the Scheme of Delegation and any specific Scheme or alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence. If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation of this, the Executive Headteacher should be consulted.

### **Approval and review:**

This policy is the responsibility of: Headteacher

This policy was approved by the Plymouth Schools Governing Body on: 11th May 2022

Stoke Damerel Community College is part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust. The Greenshaw Learning Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales, company number 7633634, registered at Greenshaw Learning Trust, Grennell Road, Sutton, SM1 3DY.

## **Stoke Damerel Community College Attendance Policy**

At Stoke Damerel Community College we firmly believe that all pupils benefit from outstanding school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to ensure that our pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. In order for a pupil's attendance record to be deemed very good, it must be 96% or above:

- 100% - Outstanding Attendance
- 96% - Very Good Attendance
- 94% - Good Attendance

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Stoke Damerel Community College will maintain systems and practices that will:

- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance is the norm.
- Maintain a safe, secure environment where pupils feel valued and welcome, thereby positively encouraging attendance.
- Raise pupil awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance, and encourage in pupils a sense of responsibility.
- Celebrate excellent school attendance.
- Support pupils and families who experience difficulties maintaining good school attendance.

### **Expectations**

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day.
- Contact the school before 9am on the morning of each day of the pupil's absence by calling 01752 284221 or emailing [attendance@sdcc.net](mailto:attendance@sdcc.net)

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

Any unexplained absence is treated as unauthorised absence.

## **Stoke Damerel Community College has a responsibility to ensure that all teachers:**

- Complete registers accurately and punctually during every registration, period and lesson.
- Assist the Attendance Officer in following up any unexplained absences upon the pupil's return to school.
- Inform the Attendance Officer / Head of Year / Safeguarding Team / other relevant staff member of concerns.
- Are alert to early indicators that could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Attendance Officer.

All Greenshaw Learning Trust Schools act in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and work collaboratively with local authorities to support parents in ensuring that their children are regularly attending school.

### **The legal framework**

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996; which may lead to prosecution. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). In February 2004, section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act gave powers to designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's attendance at school. Since September 2015 the Persistence Absence percentage has changed from 15% to 10%.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

Pupil attendance is continually monitored by the Attendance Officer. When a pupil does not attend school, the school will respond in accordance with their Attendance and Punctuality procedures, this may include:

- First Day Absence calls, text messages or emails to all named contacts with parental responsibility.
- In the event of no response being received for the absence the school will attempt to communicate with other named contacts.
- Written communication for unexplained absences.
- Implementation of a staged attendance intervention.
- Home visits.

- Continued concerns about a child's attendance may result in a referral to the school's Safeguarding Team, an EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool), the school nursing service, MASH Team (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) or the police for a welfare check.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Attendance Officer may result in a referral to the local authority requesting the issue of a Penalty Notice, an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution.

### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, school will make reasonable enquiries via known contact details and through agencies involved with the family. Visits may be undertaken to friends/neighbours and linked primary schools contacted. School will liaise with Plymouth and other local authorities where appropriate to establish the whereabouts of a child missing education and follow local information sharing arrangements in making enquiries to agencies including housing, health, police and children's social care.

Child Missing Education (or at risk of) are reported to the local authority. Students below 50% attendance are recognised as CME and the school will respond in accordance with our safeguarding duty.

### **Punctuality**

If a pupil arrives late to registration, they will receive a late mark in the register. Reasons for lateness may be investigated and responded to in line with the School's Attendance and Punctuality procedures.

Students who are late to lessons will be placed in our behaviour centre for recovery in line with the schools procedures.

Lateness after registration has closed is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) and parents/carers will be notified of this absence. Continued Lateness after the Close of Registration may result in a referral to the local authority requesting a penalty notice.

### **Absences that the school is unable to authorise include:**

- Holidays during term time.
- Arrival after the registers close at 9.30am without prior notification.
- Shopping trips, even if this is for school uniform.
- Birthday celebrations.
- Looking after a relative/pets.
- Tiredness due to extra-curricular activities.
- All unexplained absences.

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents/carers are encouraged to arrange all non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours but where this is not possible the school should be notified in advance by emailing [attendance@sdcc.net](mailto:attendance@sdcc.net) or sending a letter to the Attendance Officer, where medical

evidence will be requested. Where it is not possible to arrange appointments outside of school hours, pupils are encouraged to attend school either side of their appointment where possible.

### **Religious Holidays**

The school will authorise absence for major religious holidays.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school in advance of their intention to keep their child at home. If parents/carers do not inform the school any days missed may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Requests for extended absence for religious observances should be made in writing to the Headteacher at [info@sdcc.net](mailto:info@sdcc.net).

### **Sixth Form**

For sixth form pupils, their attendance is crucial to maximising potential and ensuring progress. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96%, the school will intervene and set supportive targets to improve attendance. If, despite support from the Sixth Form Team there is no improvement in attendance the school may decide to review progression into year 13.

### **Holidays**

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and it is essential that parents/carers take their family holidays during the school holidays. It is the school's policy not to authorise absence during term time for holidays and any absence of this nature will be recorded as unauthorised.

We recognise that there may be occasions where parents/carers feel that there are extenuating reasons for requesting leave during term time. In such circumstances parents/carers should write to/email the Headteacher outlining the reason for the request and the dates the pupil will be absent from school. The Headteacher will inform the parents/carers of his/her decision in writing.

Requests for long periods of absence will not be authorised. Prolonged unauthorised absences may put your child's place at Stoke Damerel Community College at risk.

If parents take their children on holiday during term time without authorisation the school will apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1966 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent in respect of each child not attending school. "Parents" includes partners who are not married to, but who live with, one of the parents who has main care responsibilities for the child. Other family members with parental responsibility including grandparents and siblings may also be liable for a penalty notice.

### **Penalty Notice**

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court, but which seeks to improve a pupil's attendance.

A Penalty Notice may be issued, incurring a £60 fine, which is increased to £120 if not paid within the specified timescale. Should the notice remain unpaid the matter will be taken before the magistrate's court. Alternatively, if legal action were to be taken, and a parent is found guilty of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school, it is possible that they could be fined up to a maximum of £2,500 and/or receive 3 months imprisonment.

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with the Attendance Officer.

- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.
- Where attendance has fallen below 85% or there are no less than 8 unauthorised sessions during a sixth month period.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.