

28 April 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

School Attendance

At Stocksbridge High School, we know that getting children into school every day is not always easy. We truly value the support you give your child, and we want to work in partnership with you to ensure that every student has the best possible chance to succeed.

Why good attendance is so important?

Being in school regularly helps students to feel confident, supported and ready to learn. Lessons build on one another each day, and even short absences can mean that important learning is missed. National evidence shows that students with higher attendance usually achieve better outcomes, and for this reason we encourage all students to aim for an attendance figure of at least 96%.

Persistent Absence and patterns in illness

Persistent Absence in students is when they have an attendance of less than 90%. This equates to a day off every 2 weeks. This can lead to penalty notices and fines, Patterns in absence are identified regularly by our attendance team and these will be addressed and could result in a penalty notice or fine.

Start of the school day

Students should arrive at school by 8:30am so that they are calm, organised and ready for learning, which starts at 8:40am. Arriving on time helps students to settle into the day and make a positive start to their learning.

Arriving after 9:10am

If a student arrives after 9:10am, this may be recorded as a U code, which means an unauthorised absence for the morning session. This affects a student's attendance for that day and can quickly reduce their overall attendance. We kindly ask for your support in helping students arrive on time whenever possible.

Medical appointments

We understand that medical appointments are sometimes unavoidable. Where possible, we ask that appointments are arranged outside of the school day. If an appointment does need to take place during school time, please ensure your child attends school before and/or after the appointment to reduce the impact on their learning.

Morning and afternoon registration

To be recorded as having 100% attendance for the day, students must be present for both the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) registers. Attending only part of the school day means it cannot be counted as full attendance.

Our shared legal responsibility

Government guidance, including Attendance Matters, explains that parents and carers have a legal responsibility to make sure their child attends school regularly. Schools and local authorities are expected to offer support first, but where unauthorised absence continues, further action may be taken.

Penalty notices and fines

Under national guidance introduced in August 2024, penalty notices may be issued for unauthorised absence, including term-time holidays, 10 or more U codes or low attendance. The first fine is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second fine within three years will be charged at £160, and continued absence may lead to prosecution.

Holidays in term time

Holidays during term time are not authorised. Taking a holiday without permission will lead to unauthorised absence and may result in a penalty notice being issued.

We are here to help

If your family is experiencing difficulties that are affecting attendance or punctuality, please contact the school as early as possible. We are always keen to work with families to find supportive solutions.

Thank you for your continued support. By working together, we can help every student feel confident, included and successful at Stocksbridge High School.

Yours faithfully

Mr. J. Furness
Assistant Headteacher
Stocksbridge High School

