



KINGSKERSWELL C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

We at Kingskerswell strive for excellence in education by providing a safe, secure, caring family environment, where all are valued and respected as individuals, enabling them to reach their full potential, whilst growing in their love and understanding of the Christian Faith.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Kingskerswell we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- traveller child travelling;

- family bereavement;
- involvement in a public performance, sporting competition or external examination;
- where one parent is on active duty in the Armed Forces and has leave from duty;
- at the discretion of the Head teacher.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence will **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (eg shopping, minding the house, etc);
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes absences such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of the appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again at the beginning of the afternoon session. We expect parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.55am. Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.30am will receive a late mark in the register. Children arriving after 9.30am will be registered with an unauthorised absence unless a reason for absence has been received.

In considering attendance levels, the form register is of paramount importance.

Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then

the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

The School's policy with regard to registration will be regularly communicated to parents/carers. We expect parents/carers to ensure that children are on School premises by 8.55am.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a half-termly and yearly basis;
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc); match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers and the Education Welfare Service.

First Day Response

As a vigilant and caring school we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a telephone call.

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality at Kingskerswell we:

- have clear procedures – registers close at 9.30 am;
- publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers;
- balance any sanctions with positive encouragement;
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality;
- ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons;

- follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The Governing Body set attendance targets annually and are kept informed of attendance figures.

Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Holiday or Extended Leave Request' form. Holidays during term time will not be authorised, except in '**exceptional**' circumstances.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed.

Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised:

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting at School, as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class;
- during an assessment/test period – for example Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs;
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence;
- when a pupil's attendance rate is below 95% or will fall to below 95% as a result of taking the holiday.

Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued always by post at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60. In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of

5 (10 sessions) school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current school year before a penalty notice is considered.

In cases of unauthorised absence parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This will state the extent of the child's absences and give parents/carers 15 days to bring about an improvement. In that time the child should have no unauthorised absences from school.

In cases of unauthorised holidays, warnings will be issued where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given. This means that in some cases, Penalty Notices may be issued without a warning.

Absence for religious reasons

School will authorise leave of absence for religious observance. A maximum of **3 days** will be permitted in any one academic year.

Reviewed on behalf of the Governing Body by Lead Governor ()

Reviewed and Approved by FGB: September 2019

Next review: September 2020

Signed (Chair of Governors)

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