



Attendance Policy

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Chair of Governors

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Communicating regularly and effectively with parents and carers in order to highlight the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Kings Meadow School are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance. We expect all school staff to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the children and families.

The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School Procedures

3.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.15am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

3.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school office on 01604 673730 (option 1) to leave a message on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.45am or as soon as practicably possible (see also section 6). Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness or attendance for that individual is already causing concern, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical and Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Kings Meadow School do take medical appointments into account when reviewing a pupil's attendance.

Should parents/carers need to make a medical or dental appointment in school time, they should notify the school office as soon as possible on 01604 673730.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

Attendance of pupils is carefully monitored. A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (Appendix 1).

3.5 Following-up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If the parent or carer has not notified the school of their child's absence, the school office will make telephone contact at the earliest opportunity on each day of absence.

3.6 Reporting to Parents

The school will report to parents and carers annually in the written end-of-year report.

3.7 Reporting to the Local Authority

The school must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and

- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

The 2013 regulations allow head teachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Examples include:

- Illness (48 hours minimum for a sickness or stomach bug)
- Emergency medical or dental appointment
- Hospital scheduled appointments/treatment
- Days for specific religious observance
- Family or close friend bereavement
- Family crisis
- Other compassionate grounds
- Family wedding/civil partnership taking part on a school day – this does not include traveling to the wedding unless it is abroad
- Offsite examinations, sports or performances
- Religious observance
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence and Legal Sanctions

School attendance regulations changed from 1st September 2013 under Education Regulations 2013. As a result of the 2013 legislation, head teachers are not able to allow any holidays during term time. Any holiday taken will be treated as unauthorised regardless of the reasons for it.

Unauthorised absences may be reported to the Local Authority. Legal action may be taken against you if your child has unauthorised absences. Where an absence is deemed unauthorised parents/carers may be liable to pay a penalty fee directly to the Local Authority per period of unauthorised absence.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices [Penalty notices for non-school attendance - Schools and education \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/penalty-notice).

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

5. Persistent Absence

Regular monitoring of the registers will be made by the Designated Senior Leader for Attendance, to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA). Members of the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially, school staff will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting

medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health but if the pattern continues, a referral would be made to the Local Authority.

Attendance and punctuality concerns are discussed by the Senior Leadership Team regularly (at least half termly). Parents/Carers of children whose attendance is deemed a concern will receive percentage information within their letter.

Further unauthorised absence will result in a meeting with parents/carers to allow a plan of support or Parental Contract to encourage regular attendance. Further unauthorised absence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice. The school will continue to liaise with and seek support from the School Attendance Support Officers at the local authority in these instances.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Continuing to promote our Pupil Attendance Policy
- Providing letters to parents and carers to fully explain the importance of good attendance and the impact of poor attendance on pupils learning and social interaction skills
- Providing individualised meetings to ensure the relevant services are supporting families
- Work alongside the allocated School Attendance Support Officers from the local authority, in order to support families and attendance plans
- Holding parents/carers discussions to raise the profile of attendance and to provide ongoing opportunities for discussing the concerns
- Putting action plans in place with parents/carers, pupils and relevant services where attendance is a concern, where it decreases or when it does not improve.
- Reporting ongoing developments and outcomes to the schools Governing Body and the Local Authority
- Holding multi-agency meetings with services such as health and social care or School Attendance Support Officers to explore how all services can support pupils with additional needs e.g. health concerns
- Promote good attendance through raising the profile across the school community, including with teaching and class staff, pupils and parents and carers.

7. Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.1 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

In addition, the Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school staff are aware of and comply with this policy
- make sure that staff receive adequate training on attendance
- nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the attendance officer and to report back to the Governing Body
- regularly review and challenge attendance data
- monitor attendance figures for the whole school
- take responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly and are made available to all stakeholders.

8.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher will also support staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and taking appropriate action with the support of the local authority, where necessary.

In addition, the Headteacher will:

- ensure the policy is implemented
- monitor school-level absence data and report to governors
- support staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- support the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader will:

- lead attendance across the school
- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- have an oversight of data analysis
- devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance
- arrange meetings and calls with parents and carers to discuss attendance issues
- deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families, where appropriate
- monitor and analyse attendance data termly, at the school and individual pupil level
- work with School Attendance Support Officers at the local authority to tackle persistent absence.
- report concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Attendance will be reviewed by the Head teacher and the designated senior leader every half term.

- Stage 1 - Where any child's attendance falls below 90%, or any child is not at school for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, a Stage 1 Letter will be sent home by post (see Appendix 2).

- Stage 2 - If, during the following half term, attendance has not increased or a child has again been absent for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, a Stage 2 Letter will be sent home by post. This letter will set a target of 96% attendance for the subsequent half term.
- Stage 3 - If during the half term following the Stage 2 Letter, attendance has not increased to the target set, or a child has again been absent for ten sessions or five days within a six week period, a Stage 3 Letter will be sent home by post – which will include a date for the parents to attend a meeting with school to discuss the attendance and will also trigger a referral to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team.

8.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis.

8.5 Office Staff

The Office Administrator will follow up on any absences, including taking calls from parents and carers about absence and recording it on the school system. They will:

- ascertain the reason and apply the appropriate code, according to the DfE guidance Appendix 1
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken by sharing information with the Designated Safeguarding Leads, if appropriate
- work with the Designated Attendance Officer to identify whether the absence is approved or not
- the reason given
- when the child is expected to return to school

8.6 Parents and Carers

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence by 8.45am
- Telephone the school office daily after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing
- Keep the school well informed, in cases of lengthy absence. Parents/carers will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will be taken by the headteacher and/or the Designated Senior Leader for Attendance
- Provide medical evidence (upon request) indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- Make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day, where possible
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Provide written explanations of any absence and medical evidence for whole day appointments as well as medical evidence for persistent absence from school due to alleged illness (upon request)
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the attendance officer and headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition |
|------|---|
| / | Present (am) |
| \ | Present (pm) |
| B | Off-site educational activity |
| C | Other authorised absence |
| D | Dual registered |
| E | Exclusion |
| G | Holiday not authorised |
| H | Holiday authorised by the school |
| I | Illness |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late arrival |
| M | Medical or dental appointment |
| O | Absence not authorised |
| P | Sporting activity |
| R | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence |
| U | Arrived, after registers closed |
| V | Educational trip or visit |
| W | Work experience |
| X | Not required to be in school |
| Y | Exceptional circumstances (e.g. class or school closure, or SEN Transport related issues) |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure |

Appendix 2: Sample Letters

Stage 1 Letter

Dear Parents/Carers of xxx,

RE: School Attendance Concerns

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school. [His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on 01604 673730 as soon as you can so we can arrange a meeting to discuss this.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Stage 2 Letter

Dear Parents/Carers of xxx,

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] unauthorised sessions ([number] days) on the following dates:

> [date]

> [date]

> [date]

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than 10 unauthorised sessions/absences within a six week period. You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

Please contact the school office on 01604 673730 as soon as you can so we can arrange a meeting to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Stage 3 Letter

Dear Parents/Carers of xxx

RE: Attendance

We wrote to you in xxx this year regarding xxx's attendance. At the time of the letter sent to you, xxx's attendance was xxx%. We set a target for this past half term for xxx to achieve 96% attendance. Xxx's attendance has been xxx %.

We would like to meet with you again on xxx at xxx to discuss xxx's attendance and how we can support you and xxx to increase this. Please can you confirm your attendance to me, or the School Office.

As required by law, we will now also refer xxx's attendance figures to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher