



ATTENDANCE POLICY

The ethos of our school is embedded in our key Christian values

Honesty

Forgiveness

Love for all

Celebration

Fairness

Being Thankful

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and this policy supports this commitment.

Policy approved: 10.10.13

Review Date: annually

Signed: 
Miss Tracey L Coton
Headteacher

Signed: 
Mr Chris Newport
Chair of Governors

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. DfE School attendance Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013

INTRODUCTION

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and for establishing a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- Meet the attendance targets set by the school governing body.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

WHY DOES ATTENDANCE MATTER?

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. In essence, there are two main categories of absences:

Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

RESPONSIBILITIES

While parents have primary responsibility in ensuring their children attend school regularly, the school can help parents in their efforts to achieve maximum attendance of their children. This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible. Key responsibilities that schools and parents have in promoting good attendance are listed below:

1) School's responsibilities

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school, initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.

- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance

2) Parent's responsibilities

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.55 a.m.
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's '**Absence from School Application Form**', giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and EWO to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

3) The role of the EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

- The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.
- Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."

- Kingston upon Thames Local Authority, through the Education Welfare Service, may prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.
- The Local Authority's Fast Track framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent and specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 12 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates Court.

4) School governors

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Head Teacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school office will make verbal contact with home.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and sometimes the EWO.

Stage 4: If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.

Should concerns persist the EWO will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action against a parent for their child's unauthorised absence.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS AND EXTENDED LEAVE

- Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. When deemed appropriate the case may be referred to the Education Welfare Service for legal action, including prosecution.
- Under Pupil registration regulations (2006, as amended in 2013), we strongly discourage parents from requesting time for holidays in term time and **requests will be refused except in exceptional circumstances.**

- Parents wishing to take their child on holiday during term time must send a written request, with a completed **Absence from School Application Form**, to the Headteacher **before** holiday arrangements are made and at least **two weeks prior** to the proposed holiday. **Retrospective requests will not be considered** and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:
- If parents request absence due to exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. All requests for this absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

1) The expected date of return

2) That the parents must contact school should any delays occur

3) That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

- If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.
- If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service for legal action.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill that your child is expected to develop in order to achieve and to succeed. It is also polite and respectful to be punctual.

- Children must be **in class by 8.55 a.m.** each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be **marked late** if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken but before 9.30am. Children who arrive late must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book. The school gates will be shut by 9.10 am.
- Lateness will be monitored by the school and a pupil with repeated lateness may be reported to the E.W.O. (Education Welfare Officer) after the school's initial interventions.
- If the arrival at school is **after the registers have closed at 9.30am, the pupil will receive a 'U'**. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.
- Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Headteacher.

Sickness

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by celebrating attendance as follows:

- By awarding a certificate to any class with 100% attendance for the week.
- By awarding individual certificates to individual children who have 100% for each term.
- By awarding 'no lates' certificates for whole class attendance.
- By awarding LA or Mayor's certificates to individual children who get 100% attendance for the whole academic year (September to July).