

School Attendance Policy

Kingsway Primary School and shared QLC protocol



Policy Statement

In a shared vision to encourage strong pupil attendance, the local cluster of schools (QLC), of which Kingsway Primary School is a part, has agreed a shared attendance protocol and this policy forms part of that agreement.

The QLC values the contribution that every pupil can make to the life of each school. The aim of this policy is to ensure that each school monitors and supports the full regular attendance of all pupils (100%) so that they participate fully, feel equally valued and are helped to reach their full potential. We also place great importance on promptness and do not expect any child to arrive late to school.

Purpose & Scope

This policy is intended to provide consistent guidance throughout the QLC in respect of the shared expectations of pupil's attendance and the procedures to follow where concerns arise.

This attendance policy and its implementation should encourage pupils to attend school regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.

- registering pupils accurately and efficiently;
- setting attendance targets for individual pupils and year groups;
- contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
- regularly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality;
- reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LA, Ofsted and DfE as appropriate.

Objectives

The Education(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2013, requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have by regular attendance at school. Regular attendance is defined as attending school on each day that the school is open ie the 190 days as designated on the school's term time calendar for that academic year.

This attendance policy also includes:

- registering pupils accurately and efficiently;
- setting attendance targets for individual pupils and year groups;
- contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
- regularly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality;
- reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LEA and DfES as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of all parents/carers to ensure that they are fully aware of the school's expectations and work proactively and supportively to maximise their child's attendance. Regular attendance is essential in ensuring children achieve. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so can performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem. In addition, absence can disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. As a result, all pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. This means, we expect every child to be in school and on time, for every day we are open in the year.

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. It is also when the school has not approved a pupil's absence even if requested through normal methods. *

*Parents should be aware that when they telephone school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

All pupil absence will be monitored by school staff, including trends or patterns of absence. This will be taken into consideration before authorising absence.

Pupils should not be absent for minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold.

In the case of repeated absences, we will request that parents obtain medical evidence from their doctor's surgery in order for the absence to be authorised. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming a visit or sight of a prescription. (Please note: that the QLC is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. However, in addition, it is our expectation that parents work with the school to catch up on school work that has been missed as every missed day matters.

Promoting Good Attendance

We maximise opportunities to celebrate good attendance. This will be achieved through a variety of means, including, but not limited to:

- Awarding certificates for high sustained attendance
- Recognising significant improvements of those with less than ideal attendance
- Sponsoring pupils with free Breakfast Club places
- Sending attendance related 'well done' postcards.
- Making Home Visits to discuss options to secure better attendance
- Providing support from Learning Mentors with morning routines to improve promptness
- Holding parents to account for attendance of their children

Compliance

All QLC schools are fully compliant with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2013. For further information, please visit:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that pupils attend school. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered a safeguarding matter.

Responsibility for Attendance

Regular attendance is the shared aim of parents/carers and the school. The legal responsibility remains with the parent/carer and the EWO will refer irregular attendance to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action.

School Responsibilities:

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school
- To maintain appropriate attendance data
- To have appropriate registration processes in place
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents have not communicated with school - initially with a telephone call on the first day of absence.
- To inform parents of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- To maintain 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 Local Government on attendance as and when required
- To consistently administer the attendance procedures
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance.

Parent/carers Responsibilities:

- To ensure pupils are in class ready to learn by the start of the day
- To inform the school on every day of any absence
- To request leave as far in advance as possible – please note that leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances
- To make applications for leave in writing on the appropriate form
- To work with the school and EWO service to improve lateness and attendance
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the day.

If parents or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should talk to their child's class teacher.

Monitoring Attendance

The member of staff with responsibility for attendance will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss regularly with the class teacher and Headteacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with parent/carers.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers and arrange a meeting with the parents. This is known as an Attendance Improvement Meeting (A.I.M)

Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will discuss the attendance concern with the Local Authority

Stage 4: If the concerns persist the Headteacher will make a formal referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act.

Whilst 100% attendance is our aim, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Please do discuss any concerns with the school as soon as possible so that plans can be put in place to support your family during this time; we will try to help in any way we can.

Persistent Absence

If a child's attendance falls below 90%, they are considered a 'persistent absentee' (PA). When they miss 10% or more schooling across the academic year for whatever reason or are at risk of moving towards that mark this gives cause for concern and will be monitored closely.

Absence during term time

Please note that Regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 regulation states that it prohibits schools and academies from granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and is considered that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. The Parent will ordinarily be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

There are approximately 195 days (390 sessions) a year which pupils are expected to attend school. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that family holidays are taken during this period.

Kingsway Primary School does not typically authorise absence during term time.

Fixed Penalty Notices

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate notice would be issued to each parent for each pupil.

As of 1st September 2013, the rate per parent per pupil will be £60 within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Lateness

Each school specifies the time that pupils are expected to arrive. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Pupils will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken (after 9.00am). Codes used:

- Child arrives after 9am but before 9.30am – L code 'late'
- Child arrives after 9.30am – U code. 0% attendance attributed for this session.

Lateness will be monitored and referred to the Education Welfare Officer if it becomes persistent.

Parents should be aware that consistent lateness is disrupting not only their own child's education but also that of the other pupils and therefore lateness is considered to be equally serious to absence.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Governance and the monitoring of attendance

Governors monitor the overall attendance figures of the school but also the attendance figures of year groups over time. Attendance Action planning forms part of the School Development Plan each year and remains a significant priority for raising school attainment of all groups.

Reviewed and Amended with Local Inclusion Officer. Nov 2019. Mr L Pajak