

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Authors:	Head of school & Attendance officer
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Rationale

The school recognises that regular attendance at school is vital for a child to develop academically as well as socially. It is recognised that poor attendance can be connected to low achievement.

The school aims to encourage good attendance and punctuality, but is aware that children who are ill do not function well.

The school will contact parents when it is felt that for a child to remain at school is not in the child's best interest.

The policy aims to provide clear guidelines for staff so ensuring consistency across the school.

Aims

1. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for pupils, parents, staff and governors.
2. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
3. To agree roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency in dealing with all matters relating to attendance and punctuality.
4. To develop a comprehensive system for collecting and analysing attendance related data.
5. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions
6. To work closely with Education Welfare Services and other agencies.
7. To recognise the needs of individual pupils returning to school following significant periods of absence.

Guidelines for Implementation

1. *Maintaining Attendance as a priority*

- Apply school Attendance Policy consistently.
- Include comments on attendance and punctuality in reports to parents, staff and governors.
- Keep parents informed about levels of attendance by phone call, letters and meetings.
- Keep pupils informed about levels of attendance through assemblies and awards.

2. *Providing advice and guidance*

- Provide clear information for parents about attendance and punctuality.
- Provide opportunities to discuss attendance with pupils in circle time / PSHCE.
- Involve parents at the earliest stage when there are concerns about a pupil's attendance.

3. *Systems, roles and responsibilities*

- School doors will open at 8:40am.
- The school day begins at 8:50am and all external gates will be locked at this 8:55am.
- Morning registers will be closed at 9:00am.
- External doors will be closed at 8:50am and children arriving after this time should enter through the main entrance where they will be recorded as arriving late.
- Arriving between 08:50am and 09:15am is recorded as late; after 09:15am is recorded as unauthorised absence
- Registers will also be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- Class teachers will record on Arbor details of children absent that day.
- It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school before 9:00am if their child will not be attending school that day. Failure to do so could result in their child's absence remaining unauthorised.
- The attendance team will attempt to contact the parents of absentees, before 9.30 am, where the reason for absence is not known. If no contact is made then the next numbers on the emergency contact list would be called, if after all number have been called and there is no reason/explanation then a home visit would be completed by the pastoral team. If the child has not been seen or a reason given then a welfare check could be made to the police. This is primarily to ensure that parents are aware that their child is not in school but also to establish the reason for absence and the safeguarding of the child. Pastoral team staff will also update Arbor and CPOMS accordingly.
- Standard letters will be sent home when the reason for a pupil's absence is not clear, deteriorating or when a pupil is consistently late.
- If children's attendance continues to cause concern, the Safeguarding Officer will contact parents either verbally or by letter to arrange an Attendance Panel Meeting to discuss their child's attendance.
- The Attendance and Pupil Support Officer (APSO) will be notified in all cases where a pupil's attendance falls below 95%. 95% attendance is equal to 9 days absence in a year or 3 days in a typical term.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the Head of school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993).

- a. **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** - If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence would be code I and treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents with a copy of an appointment card or letter the code M would then be used. A book is maintained by the School Office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to the site. Parents will be encouraged, where possible, to secure a non-emergency medical appointment out of school hours
- b. **Lateness** - The school policy is to actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons and affect children's confidence. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. If a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Attendance Team in order to reach a satisfactory solution. **Late is after 8:50am. Arrivals after 9:15am will be classed as unauthorised.**
- c. **Family Bereavements** - The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. The Principal has discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.
- d. **Family Holidays** – School will not grant leave of absence for family holidays and any such absences will be recorded as unauthorised and reported to the APSO. Parents must fill in the school holiday form which can be obtained at the school office if requiring to take them out of school for a period of time. In line with current legislation Parents will be fined for taking their children on holiday during term time. A penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child. This is for £60 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.
- e. **Days of Religious Observance** - Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong is classified as authorised absence. Parents should notify the school in writing prior to the absence. To note 3 days are permitted within a 12-month period where a religion other than Christianity is practiced and the day falls on a usual school day.
- f. **Other absences** - Shopping trips, birthday trips, days out and holidays at home will not be authorised.

4. Collecting and analysing data

- The school will register attendance using Arbor.
- All registers will be marked in accordance with DfES regulations (September 2006).

- Absences will be monitored by pastoral staff to establish trends in individual absence and target effective action.
- All attendance data will be collated and analysed weekly, termly and annually to establish trends and to provide reports to governors, EWO, Local Authority and DfE.

5. Rewards and Sanctions

- Good attendance will be celebrated with the award of class and individual certificates.
- The class with the highest weekly attendance will receive a class reward.
- Children with 100% attendance for a whole term will receive a certificate and for the whole year certificate and voucher, in addition to the attendance trip
- Children with 97%+ attendance for the whole year will be rewarded with either an attendance celebration.

6. Working closely with other agencies

- Members of the Attendance Team will liaise regularly with the APSO
- Priority will be given by the Attendance Team to meetings with APSOs.
- Multi-agency meetings will be arranged as appropriate.

7. Action aimed at improving attendance where attendance is a cause for concern:

- Meetings with parents to discuss strategies in school and at home which encourage regular school attendance and the production of an action plan for improving attendance
- Pastoral Team pick up if required to help with attending school in exceptional circumstances
- Use of Pastoral Team to build positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Use of Peer Mentors to provide a social support network
- Use of methods for discouraging absence (i.e. meetings, letters home)
- Extra help with work missed
- In-school counselling
- Where intervention at the school-level fails to bring about an improvement in school attendance a referral to the Education Welfare Service must be made. The types of actions to be taken at the school-level and the trigger for referral to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service should be set through negotiation between the school and the APSO.

8. Poor Attendance

- If attendance continues to dip a school attendance improvement contract will be offered. Failure to adhere to the contract may result in legal action being considered. If legal action is approved by the Kirklees Legal Intervention Panel, the matter is heard in the Magistrates' Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and a parent will receive a criminal record. Additional other community orders may be attached.

9. Suspended/Excluded Pupils

- If a pupil has been suspended or excluded, that pupil may not be in a public place during the period of suspension/exclusion without just cause (such as attending a medical appointment). If that pupil is seen in a public place, a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child. This is for £60 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal

proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.

Kirklees Code of Conduct for the issuing of Penalty Notices can be found [here](#).

Equality and Diversity

This policy will be implemented fairly for all pupils regardless of ethnicity, gender or disability.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All members of the school community will share responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy. Its effectiveness will be evaluated at each annual review. The attendance team will prepare a fortnightly report for meetings with the APSO. The attendance team will provide a breakdown of children's attendance termly to enable the Senior Leadership Team and APSO complete their termly review of attendance.