



Attendance Policy

Issue No: 2
Status: APPROVED

Approved	Date	Name	Signature
School			
Governing Body			

CHANGE HISTORY

Issue No	Issued On	Next Review Due	List of changes
1	23/01/18	January 2020	
2	March 2020	March 2022	Reference to 3 letter system removed. EWO amended to LAAO

Attendance Policy

Principles

Kettlefields Primary School aims to work together with Parent/Carers and the Local Authority Attendance Officers (LAAOs) formally known as the Education Welfare Officer, to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to improve achievement of pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the whole school. The recognised expected level of attendance at school is 100% unless pupils with chronic health issues or there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Parent/Carers' Responsibilities

Parent/Carer have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

Parent/Carer must:

- Ensure all children registered at Kettlefields Primary School attend regularly and punctually everyday unless prevented from doing so by illness or medical appointment.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. For the absence to be authorised, we require supporting evidence from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.

Registration

- The classroom door is opened at 8.45 am.
- All external classroom doors are locked at 9.00 am.
- Once the external classroom door has been locked, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at 9.00 am and closed at 9.05 am. Pupils who arrive at school between 9.05am and 9.15am will be recorded as late on the register.

Pupils who arrive at school after 9.15 am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as U; unauthorised late.

Lateness

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parent/Carer will initially receive a letter informing of them of the school's concerns. This will advise Parent/Carer to speak to a member of staff to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, Parent/Carer will be invited to a formal meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address this, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for pupils who are statutory school aged.

Pupils who arrive during the registration period and up to 9:15 will be marked as late. Any pupil who arrives after 9:15 will be marked as an unauthorised late. Children who are persistently late to school will miss a significant amount of their education.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parent/Carer must contact the school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 9.05 am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of staff will attempt to make contact with the Parent/Carer once the registers have closed at 9.05 am.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Failure to make contact with the Parent/Carer to establish a reason for an absence will result in an Unexplained Absence Form being sent home for the parent/carers to complete and return to school at the earliest opportunity. Any unexplained absences will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a parent/carers to an enquiry regarding their child's absence.

School Responsibilities

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Head teacher having overall responsibility in the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

If applicable, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern, despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a penalty notice/fine being issued by the LAAO.

Staff

Staff will aim to make contact with the Parent/Carer of any pupil who is absent from school and a reason has not been provided by 9.05 am.

Staff will ring the first priority contact number to establish a reason for the absence, if unable to make contact, they will call the next contact until we have been provided with a reason for absence. If the reason for absence is still unknown, staff will:

- Phone the contact numbers provided by the parent/carers to enquire about a pupil's absence

- Leave a message on voice mail requesting parents to contact school regarding their child's absence
- Complete the registers in accordance to the guidelines relating to correct usage of codes
- Log the outcome of the phone call on sims – pupil data system
- Inform the School Attendance Officer should there be a particular concern regarding an individual pupil's attendance or lateness
- Visit the pupil's house to try to make contact.
- If, by 3pm, once all of the above steps have been taken, and a reason for absence has still not been determined, the school will make contact with the Police.

The School Attendance Officer

Lateness and attendance is monitored daily by the school attendance officer who will:

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carer of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if reason unknown.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carer once attendance has fallen below the threshold set of 96% by following a Four Step Program.
- Step One. A letter advising Parent/Carer of our concerns regarding the level of their child(ren) attendance and/or lateness
- Step Two, informal contact. This can be via telephone or a brief catch up at the start/end of the school day.
- Step Three. A formal Parent Contract meeting to be held in school with Parent/Carer to discuss concerns and, working together, targets will be set to improve the attendance and/or lateness. These targets will be reviewed at the end of an agreed monitoring period.
- Step Four. Should the targets set at step three not be met following a review, despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for children of statutory school age.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance and/or lateness.
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils 'Child Missing in Education'.
- Meet with LAAO on the allocated visits to school, who will also monitor the registers and follow up any identified concerns.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Complete a Medical Needs Assessment on pupils with absences of fifteen days during the school year
- Monitor and act upon requests for term time leave of absence and ensure Parent/Carer are informed of procedures in relation to authorised/unauthorised leave.

Only the Head teacher or a designated member of staff may authorise any absence for a legitimate reason, not all absence supported by Parent/Carer will be classified as authorised.

Definitions of Leave:

Kettlefields Primary School expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness, subject to pattern of illness or a medical appointment where supporting evidence has been provided to cover the period of absence. However, there is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending where the appointment falls within the school day.
- Religious Observance - only days exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to
- The leave of absence has been granted due to an exceptional, unavoidable circumstances.

Unauthorised leave:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parent/carer, such as shopping, hair appointments, visiting family or birthdays.
- Medical appointments where supporting evidence of appointment details have not been produced
- There has been no reason provided by the Parent/Carer to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance

Guidance for Parents – Term Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term Time Leave Request form and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

Exceptional circumstance (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis, such as up to two days absence from school to visit a dying relative, death of a family member, attendance at a funeral or any unavoidable one off event, but the following requests for leave of absence that do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and will not be unauthorised and could be subject to a penalty notice/fine for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term
- Trip of a life time
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit

Penalty Notice

The fine for a penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent, increasing to £120 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child (ren) this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

Parents who take unauthorised leave during term time or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence over any 4 week period could be subject to the issue of a penalty notice or court prosecution.