



# Attendance Policy

Approved by the  
Local Governing Body  
September 2023

Next review  
September 2024



## **Statement from the Department of Education:**

*“Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn”.*

## **The Government expects Schools and Local Authorities to:**

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, except schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective daily processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## **Parents to perform their legal duty by:**

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child is unexpectedly absent.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

(Department for Education – Working Together to Improve School Attendance – May 2022)

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a full-time education. Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996 says:

*“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, without reasonable justification, then his/her parent is guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted.”*



## **Statement of intent**

Kenley Primary School believes that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that: “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education, suitable:
  - (a) to age, ability, and aptitude, and
  - (b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Kenley Primary School.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school’s Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (2022) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with responsibility for attendance is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

Parents are expected to take responsibility for:



- The attendance of their child during term-time.
- Promoting good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring that their child attends school every day.

Pupils are also responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year (September-July). The school expects all children to attend every day that the school is open and to be on time for registration.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed. (8.55am for all children).
  - Not attending school for any reason.
- An **“authorised absence”** as:
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
  - An absence due to a family emergency.
- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
  - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Truancy before or during the school day.
  - Unexplained absence.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school during the day for an unauthorised reason.
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
  - Attendance which falls below **90%** of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

At Kenley we strive to maintain a successful partnership between our parents and the school. Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported



to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

### **Promoting good attendance at Kenley Primary School.**

- Attendance assemblies – a member of the SLT, Pupil Parliament or our Educational Welfare Officer may deliver these. These assemblies will reinforce the need for good school attendance.
- PHSE/circle time sessions – the class teacher may use a session to deliver a follow up about good attendance.
- The school newsletter will publish class attendance as a percentage on a weekly basis. <https://kenleyprimary.org.uk/newsletters/>

### **Procedures to support good attendance**

Good attendance will be supported by:

- Maintaining appropriate registration processes.
- Maintaining appropriate attendance data.
- Clearly communicating the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents, and pupils.
- Having consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Following up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Informing parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discouraging unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Working with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Expecting parents to make medical or dental appointments outside school hours except in exceptional circumstances or emergencies.
- Referring to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Reporting attendance statistics to Croydon LA and the DfE where requested.

All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the member of the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Details of our class attendance levels can be seen on our weekly newsletter which is published in the school newsletter: <https://kenleyprimary.org.uk/newsletters/>



## **Absence Procedure:**

At our school, the following procedures will normally apply to pupil absences:

### **Absence notification:**

- Where possible the parents should make telephone contact with the school ahead of registration time (8.45am) on the first day of the absence (except when a prior written request for the absence has been agreed).
- If a phone call has not been received in school from a parent, a member of the school administrative staff will try to contact them on the first day of absence to determine the reason for the absence.
- If contact has been attempted and cannot be made and the child is considered to possibly be at risk, then the school will act in line with our Safeguarding Policy. This may involve a home visit involving two members of staff.
- If a child is absent for two weeks with no communication having been made with the school, then the child is deemed 'missing from education' and the school will proceed in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

### **Late arrival:**

- Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- The school day starts at **08.45**. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- Registers are marked at **08.45**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- All registers close at **09:15**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, registers are marked by **13.10** (KS1) and **13:25**(KS2). Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **13:30**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- If a child arrives after the start of the school session, they must report to the school office where they must sign in and receive a late slip. The late slip is then handed to the class teacher when the child enters the classroom. If a child does not have a late slip, the class teacher will ask them to return to the office to register.

### **Requests for leave:**

- Parents who want the school to consider granting a leave of absence in school term time are required to submit this in writing to the principal. This written request should be made by completing a 'Request for Leave during Term Time' form which is available from the school office.
- Any request must be made in advance of the actual period. Each request will be considered by the school individually and on its own merits. In considering a request, the school will take account of:
  - i) The exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request being made.
  - ii) Frequency of similar requests.
  - iii) Whether the parent made the request in advance



iv) Pupils due to take SAT's will not be granted leave of absence in that period.

- A written response will be sent to the parents when the individual request has been considered by the principal.

### **Half-day absences:**

- All half-day absences from school will be recorded and classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised half-day absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for unavoidable causes.

Reasons may include:

- The child being sent home from school due to illness
- A religious observance
- The death of a close family member
- An urgent medical or dental appointment
- Where written leave of absence was requested in advance by the parents and the Head Teacher, having considered the request has determined that exceptional circumstances apply.

- Unauthorised half-day absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which authorisation has not been agreed.

Reasons may include:

- Parents keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- If a child arrives too late at school to get a mark for that session
- Unauthorised holiday
- Written leave of absence requested in advance by a parent for their child, where the principal does not consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation will be recorded as unauthorised and may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service. The service may then decide to issue parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice for the period of the unauthorised absence. The issuing of penalty notices is not influenced by previous good attendance. As from 1st September 2013 the rate of each penalty notice will be £60 if paid within 21 days (about 3 weeks), rising to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days (about 4 weeks). If a penalty notice is not paid parents may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court.

Where a referral for poor or irregular patterns of attendance has been made to the local Education Welfare Service, the school will support any possible legal action taken by the local authority.

The member of SLT with responsibility for attendance has termly meetings with the Educational Welfare Officer, but contacts are made regularly between them.

### **Modelling, sport, and acting performances/activities**



Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing, or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.

The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:

- The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
- The conditions of the licence will be observed.

A copy of the licence must be provided to the school prior to the absence.

The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.

The school will monitor absence due to modelling, sporting, or acting performances/activities to ensure they do not have an adverse effect on their education.

### **Addressing poor attendance**

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children absent from school often develop large learning gaps which will impact their progress and ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Where problems with regular attendance do occur, we will seek in the first instance to resolve the issue between school, parents and the pupils concerned. This will be done at the earliest opportunity possible, to avoid the impression that attendance does not matter and to help avoid the problem becoming worse.

We believe that full attendance for a pupil can be achieved, but where problems arise, parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the school to resolve any difficulties.

The member of SLT with responsibility for attendance is closely support of the administrative staff for the monitoring of attendance. Procedures are followed to ensure effective communication exists between the school and parents:





## **Attendance less than 92%:**

Contact is made initially with an informal discussion, either in person or over the telephone. A discussion will take place about the concern. If the concern is continuing, written communication will begin:

1. Initial awareness letter to inform the parent of the latest attendance figure and formally requesting an improvement.
2. Attendance is monitored until the attendance reaches 96%. If attendance improves, a positive letter is sent to parents / carers.
3. If, however, further absence occurs, then a letter requiring medical evidence will be sent.
4. In the event of an illness, parents are reminded they are required to provide medical evidence. If none is provided, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.
5. If a child records 8 sessions or more of unauthorised absence in a 6-week period, the family will be referred to the LA to decide the next course of action which may involve a Fixed Penalty Notice.
6. In addition to monitoring for 8 or more unauthorised sessions, lack of improvement in attendance is also monitored. If attendance fails to improve, this will lead to the school referring the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). A parent panel will take place, involving the EWO, a Governor and the Deputy Principal. A parent contact will be agreed. A second parent panel will take place within a four-week period of the first. If no improvement is demonstrated, the EWO will consider court action.

In addition, the following actions will be taken:

- Termly – the Educational Welfare Officer will visit to discuss persistent absentees, to hold Team Around Family (TAF) meetings, to advise the school about additional steps to improve individual children's attendance and to arrange home visits if required.
- Recording attendance and absence registers of attendance will be maintained for each school session (two school sessions for each school day). This is the responsibility of class teachers or covering member of staff assigned to the class.

This Policy Addendum follows the updated Government/Department for Education (DFE) advice produced in May 2022.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073591/School\\_attendance\\_guidance\\_May-2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073591/School_attendance_guidance_May-2022.pdf)

### **Protocol for absence reporting**

At our school, the following procedures will normally apply to pupil absences:

Absence notification:

- Where possible the parents should make telephone contact with the school before registration time on the first day of the absence (except when a prior written request for the absence has been agreed).
- If a phone call has not been received in school from a parent, a member of



the school administrative staff will try to contact them as soon as possible on the same day, to determine the reason for the absence.

- If contact has been attempted and cannot be made and the child is considered to possibly be at risk, the school will act in line with our Safeguarding Policy. This may involve a home visit by two members of staff.
- If a child is absent for two weeks with no communication having been made with the school, then the child is deemed 'missing from education' and the school will proceed in line with our Safeguarding Policy.