



Attendance Policy

“developing successful children, achieving high standards”

Kender Values:

Kindness and **responsibility**

Empathy and **resilience**

Nurture and **reflection**

Diligence and being **ready**

Encouragement and **resourcefulness**

Respect and **reasoning**

Reviewed Spring 2020

Introduction

Kender Primary School is committed to the principles stated in this policy document, we sincerely believe that all children benefit from the education we provide. We have high expectations of ourselves and our families, and value full attendance and excellent punctuality. In order to achieve this we will take appropriate action to ensure that all children achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any barriers, which may impede full attendance, are addressed as quickly as possible.

We aim for our whole school attendance to be 100%.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out how Kender Primary School approaches school absence and manages non-attendance. The policy is linked to the school's strategic aims to ensure that:

- All students have an equal right and access to, an education in accordance with the National Curriculum; and
- No student will be deprived of their educational opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.

Rationale and statutory requirements

Kender Primary School recognises the importance of attendance in school and is fully aware of the correlation between high levels of attendance and attainment. We are aware that regular attendance is necessary for success in school and mums/dads and carers are key persons making a difference in their child's life.

Kender Primary School provides an environment and fosters an ethos where high levels of attendance are the norm, while providing support and encouragement to improve, whenever high levels of attendance are not achieved.

All schools have a legal requirement to record attendance in a register, which must be taken twice a day. The register records not only if the children are present or absent but also whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. (See appendix for definition). There must be legitimate reasons for a child to be absent from school, for example illness or having to attend medical treatment. All such situations must be fully explained to the school in order that the pupil's absence will be recorded as an authorised absence. Absence codes are granted at the school discretion and we may request medical evidence for absence due to illness and medical appointments.

Our practice

Expectations

Kender Primary School expects that all our children will:

- Attend school regularly and achieve over 97% attendance
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day; and
- Carry out any work provided by the school during an authorised leave period.

Kender Primary School expects that mums, dads and carers will:

- Endeavour to arrange health appointments out of school hours wherever possible;
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may prevent their child from attending school;
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child attends school regularly;
- Contact school, as soon as is practical and preferably early on the morning of absence, whenever their child is unable to attend school; and
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence.

Parents and children can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- Early contact when a student is absent without explanation;
- Working in partnership with parents to encourage good attendance and punctuality
- Action on any attendance problem notified to the school;
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate; and
- Attendance figures published in the School's weekly Newsletter to parents.

We encourage attendance by:

- Consistent, clear communication with parents and students about the importance of regular, attendance.
- Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with Governors, parents and students.
- The accurate completion of registers at the start of each session, and within 10 minutes of the start of each session.

The school will respond to non-attendance by:

- Contacting parents on the **first or second day** of an absence if no reason for absence has been received. Contact will be by telephone or text message.
- On the third day of absence without contact from the parent/carer a home visit may be carried out. This will also be the case for prolonged illness without medical evidence. In this way we can ensure the safety and protection of our children.
- Seeking parental consent to contact the child's GP for information to support prolonged absence.
- Writing to parents/carers to register the school's concerns were attendance falls below 97%.
- Continuing to monitor the child's attendance and if there is no sustained improvement during this time parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with school staff to help resolve the difficulties where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging.
- Making a referral to the local authority Education Welfare and Inclusion Service where there is no response to school intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted.

We encourage punctuality by:

- Providing a consistent message to children in assemblies, lessons etc about the importance of being on time for learning.
- The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.20pm (should times need to be changed this will be communicated to parents)
- Taking the register as children enter the class. Registers are closed at 9.20am (all gates are closed at 9.05am)
- Children are marked as late after 9.15 and marked as U after 9.20. Children have to sign in and receive a late sticker.

- Regularly checking and monitoring lateness, which is discussed at the weekly inclusion meeting.
- Ensuring classes are ready for parents to collect children promptly at the end of the day
- Contacting parents when children are still at school after 3.45pm. Children are deemed late at 3.30pm.

The school will respond to lateness by:

- Keeping a record of lateness. Children arriving after the register has close are classed as late and will incur a L-code, after 9.20 this is a U-code which is legally considered as an absence.
- Contacting parents by phone initially then by letter where lateness is a concern.
- Arranging a meeting with parents to discuss lateness where there is no improvement.
- Setting targets for improvement.
- Seeking advice from the local authority Attendance Welfare and Inclusion Service where lateness continues to cause concern.

Parents should be aware that the Education (Penalty Notices) England (Amendment) Regulations 2013 set out procedures for issuing penalty notices to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

Holiday Absence

Holidays will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances. Each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. In order for the Headteacher to judge whether there are exceptional circumstances to approve the request, the following will be used as a guide:

- The reason for the request;
- The child's attendance at the time of the request;
- National tests/time of year; and
- The impact of the absence on the child's learning.

Where the child's attendance is below 97% at the time of the request, Kender Primary School will only authorise term time absence in exceptional circumstances. If a child has been genuinely ill or had authorised absences other than for holidays in term time, these factors will be taken into account when considering the application.

All requests must be made on the school's absence request form and submitted two weeks before the date being requested. The request must state the first day of absence and the exact date the child will return to school. The Headteacher will respond in writing within five working days of the request being submitted.

Where the reason for absence is unclear, the Headteacher or the Inclusion team will invite the parent or carer in to discuss the reasons for the application.

If a request for absence is not agreed, the reason for refusal will be clearly stated and evidence given (for example, the attendance in this academic year has been below 97%). If the child is taken out of school without the request being granted this will be classed as an unauthorised absence and

may be referred to the local authority Education Welfare and Inclusion Service. Such absences may also incur a penalty fine on return.

If the request is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the exact date the child must return to school. If the child does not return on the expected date they may be referred to the local authority Education Welfare and Inclusion Service for a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Referrals

The school will refer any absence to the Attendance Welfare and Inclusion Service when a family has taken leave when permission has been denied.

A parent may receive a separate Penalty Notice from the Education Welfare and Inclusion Service following referral for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice may also be used for poor school attendance where there are high levels of unauthorised absences.

Access to this policy document

This policy is available via the school office, is available on the school website or on request.

Policies

This policy links to other school's policies on:

Anti-Bullying
Complaints
Health and Safety
Promoting Good Behaviour
PSHE
Safeguarding

Appendix

Definition of Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Authorised absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, unavoidable medical appointments, family bereavement, religious observances or 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasion will be determined by the Headteacher on an individual basis.

Unauthorised absence

Is when a child is absent and a parent/carer has not contacted school, or the child is absent for the following:

- Birthdays (parent or child)
- Shopping
- Looking after family members
- Going to the airport or other similar circumstances
- Or when school does not accept the reason given for absence

Persistent Absence

Is where a child has not attended school for a prolonged period of time and the school have not been kept informed by parents/carers.