



Attendance Policy

Core Values

Readiness

Resilience

Respect

School Values

Independence

Ambition

Compassion

Co-operation

Initiative

Enjoyment

Responsibility

Confidence

Celebration

Kindness

Honesty

Individuality

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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, and therefore from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any barriers, which may impede full attendance, are addressed as quickly as possible.

Education of your child requires collaboration between the school and the child's parents or carers for us to help your child be the best learner. Please feel free to contact us if you have any concerns about your child.

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. Kender Primary School is aware that regular attendance is necessary for success in school and mums, dads and carers are the key persons who will make a difference. We believe that we are partners with mums, dads and carers in making good attendance a success and this partnership is very important to the school.

As Kender Primary School we recognise that absence from school can indicate a concern of a safeguarding nature.

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. We expect all children to attend regularly and punctually.

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 pupils are present or absent but also whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. 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.

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 children have an equal right and access to an education in accordance with the National Curriculum and in keeping with their age, ability and aptitude; and
- no child will be deprived of their educational opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other children.

Our practice

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absence:

1. authorised absence, which is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence; and
2. unauthorised absence, which is when the school has not received a reason for absence (or received an unsatisfactory reason) or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

Examples	Authorised absences	Unauthorised absences
	Genuine illness Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the child Major religious observances Visits to prospective new schools External exams or educational assessments	Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park Birthday treat Oversleeping due to a late night Looking after other children/ other family member Appointments for other family members Holidays which have not been agreed

Our school gates open from 08:45 in the morning and are closed at 09:00. After this time, children come in through the main entrance on Kender Street. Any child who arrives after 09:10 is marked as late on the school register. Register marks are created by the Department for Education and we adhere to the DfE guidance in their application.

Our school day finishes at 15:30 and we expect all children to be collected by 15:40.

Expectations

Kender Primary School expects that all our children will:

- attend school regularly; over 96% attendance and better is expected, in line with the expectations of the Local Authority; and
- arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.

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

- endeavour to arrange health appointments out of school hours wherever possible - we encourage attendance both before and after the appointment time where possible;
- inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may prevent their child from attending school;
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details, including addresses and emergency contacts;
- provide supporting documentation for illness if requested – this can take the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit to a doctor's surgery, a copy prescription or a medicine bottle which should be provided to the school office (please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost);
- fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child attends school;
- contact school, as soon as is practical and preferably early on the morning of absence, whenever their child is unable to attend school giving the reasons; and
- seek permission from the school for any leave of absence.

If absence continues beyond one day, we expect parents to call in and let us know about absence and the estimated date of return.

Messages regarding absence can be made via leaving messages on our dedicated absence line, by emailing office@kender.lewisham.sch.uk, by sending texts or in-app messages on the Arbor Education app.

Parents and children can expect the following from the school:

- regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- early contact when a child is absent without explanation;
- 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 Newsletter to parents.

We encourage attendance by:

- Consistent, clear communication with parents and children about the importance of regular, attendance.
- Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with Governors, parents and children.
- The accurate completion of registers at the start of each session, and within 10 minutes of the start of each session.
- Recognising good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.

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 either letter, telephone or text message).
- Inviting the mum/dad/carer to visit school to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging.
- The school will refer to the Attendance Officer to request a priority visit or make a formal referral once the pattern of absence meets the service referral criteria where there is no response to school intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without explanation.
- The Attendance Officer will call parents in to meet with the Headteacher to discuss strategies for improvement which will be monitored on a half termly basis.
- Where supporting documentation for illness requested has not been provided or has been deemed insufficient, any absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Making home visits when required.
- If we have concerns about attendance, we may share information with other agencies such as MASH.

We encourage punctuality by:

- Providing a consistent message to children in assemblies, lessons etc about the importance of being on time for learning.
- Opening the gates for children to come into school from 08:45.
- Taking the register by 09.10.
- Regularly checking and monitoring lateness.

The school will respond to lateness by:

- Keeping a record of lateness.
- Contacting parents 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 support from the Attendance Officer where lateness continues to cause concern.

- Where attendance falls below 92%, in any half term, parents may be called in to meet with the Headteacher and the Attendance Officer. The school sets aside on day for these meetings during the last week of each half term.

Parents should be aware that the Education (Penalty Notices) England (Amendment) Regulations 2007 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. Lewisham issues Penalty Notices for poor attendance and unauthorised leave of absence for a holiday in term time.

Each child's attendance can be summarised as follows:

99% to 100%	Excellent	1 or 0 days off school. Your child's attendance is well above the school target.
97% to 98%	Very Good	4 to 3 days off school Your child's attendance is at or above the school target. This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. They have a good start in life and you are supporting a positive work ethic.
95 to 96%	Good	10 to 5 days off school. Your child's attendance is just below the school target.
91%-95%	Slight Concerns	More than 10 days off school. Your child's attendance is below expected levels and will be monitored. A letter, phone call or a meeting may be arranged to inform you of your child's attendance and plan for next steps improvement.
90% or below	Concerns	More than 20 days off school. Absence is now significantly affecting your child's attainment and progress. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. The school will meet with you to review the particular context and to plan for improved attendance and/or punctuality. The Education Welfare Officer may be involved at this stage
Below 85%	Highly concerned	More than 30 days off school. Absence is seriously affecting attainment and progress and disrupting your child's development. Your child's attendance is now a major concern. It is probable that a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be made and a meeting will be convened at school to put in place strategies to improve attendance rapidly. Legal proceedings may follow.

Term time absence

The regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday. If parents take their child on holiday during term time this will be counted as unauthorised absence – this is an illegal absence.

Term time absence will only be authorised in 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;
- 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 96%, Kender Primary School will only authorise term time absence in very 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.

We expect that permission for term-time absence will be made in advance.

We understand that there are occasions when term time absence is unavoidable. If this is the case, then we aim to offer access to online learning or ask that the child completes a travel journal for submission on their return. Children who attend hospitals on a regular basis can make use of hospital classrooms or similar resources where provided.

Although there is no government guidance defining what are "exceptional circumstances", Kender Primary School believes that these include but are not limited to the following:

- death of a parent;
- death of a grandparent;
- death of a sibling;
- death of a family member living in the family home.

The fact that taking holidays during term time is cheaper is not an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances are unique or one-off situations.

All requests must be made to the school in writing providing detailed reasons for the child's absence. Where practicable, any request should be made at least two weeks prior to the proposed absence. A response to the written request will be made within five days of the request being submitted. Evidence to support the written request for absence should accompany the letter of request.

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, that attendance in this academic year has been below 96%).

If permission for term time absence is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated and dates included so that the parent is informed of what date the pupil should be back in school.

At Kender Primary School we understand that some of our children may have underlying medical conditions and it is important to us to ensure that

- Children, staff and parents understand how our school will support children with medical conditions
- Children with medical conditions are properly supported to allow them to access the same education as other children, including school trips and sporting activities

Requests for absence which are sought to extend a school holiday will not be granted, for whatever reason.

Penalty Notice Referrals

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

Both parents may receive a separate Penalty Notice from the Attendance Service following referral for each child taken out of school.

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:

PSHE

Health and Safety

Promoting Good Behaviour

Anti-Bullying

Complaints

Safeguarding