

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



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# The Kite Primary Federation

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Attendance Statement

Regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility of parents, school and the Local Authority. Regular attendance means that children must attend when required to do so by the school. This is crucial to ensure that each child reaches their full potential.

As a school we follow the DfE guidelines and expect children to maintain an attendance figure above 95% throughout the academic year. The DfE documentation: *School Attendance October 2014* states:

“Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school”.

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. The Government has stated that once a child’s attendance falls to **90%** they are classed as ***persistently absent***. This equals just nineteen school days. Attendance below 90% is a cause for possible referral to Family Services.

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to monitor and report on absences and ensure this policy is executed within the federation.

### 2. Legal Responsibilities

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education.

Once a child is registered at a school, the parent/ carer is legally responsible for ensuring they attend regularly.

A child registered at a school can miss school only in very limited circumstances. These include:

- When the child is too ill to attend (please see the medicine policy and attendance letter for clarification )
- When the school has authorised the absence beforehand

If a child is missing school without good reason, schools and local authorities have a number of legal powers that they can use.

The school has an obligation to:

- Record attendance twice a day
- Tell the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly and is absent for 10 or more school days in a row
- Publish attendance data for the governing body to monitor

### **3. Register of Attendance**

The attendance register will remain open for a period of 30 minutes at the start of each session, anyone arriving outside of this period will receive a u code. All absences will be recorded in the register using the recommended codes.

### **4. Authorised & Unauthorised Absence**

DFE amendments to Education Regulations 2006 for school attendance came into force in 2013, removing references to family holidays and extended leave, therefore any absence during term time for a family holiday will no longer be authorised unless family circumstances meet the criteria in section. Parents do not have a statutory right to 10 days leave of absence but do have a legal responsibility to make sure their child receives a full time education.

Parents considering taking a child out of school in term time should submit a leave of absence form which is available from the school office. Forms should be received at least 4 weeks before the intended leave of absence.

The school may consider approving a request for leave only if there are exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the head teacher for example

- If a parent is employed by the following : Armed Forces, Prison Service, Police or Fire Service
- To attend a funeral of a close family member
- To attend a holiday if a close family member has a terminal illness

All absence requests will need to be explained and they will be considered on an individual basis. This will be through looking at the context of the family, the child's previous attendance record and the actual reason for the absence. (For any child with an overall attendance record of below 95% it is very unlikely that non-attendance will be authorised)

If a request is not authorised and parents still take the child out of school this will appear as unauthorised absence. This may lead to a referral to Targeted Support.

The school may request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice in line with the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct.

## **5. Promoting Good Attendance**

At The Kite Primary Federation we have a culture of celebrating all kinds of achievement and progress, academic and non-academic. Attendance is included in this. Details are outlined in the Federation's "Working Together On Attendance" leaflet.

## **6. Working with Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers can support their children by:

- Making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Discussing any problems they may have in school/home if their child is reluctant to come to school and talk to their class teacher or the head teacher about any concerns
- Not letting them take time off for minor ailments

All appointments should be arranged before or after school hours where possible.

Time out of school will only be authorised for emergency dental, medical appointments and hospital appointments.

## **7. Absence Procedure**

- Parents / carers of children who are marked absent in the register, will be contacted by phone on the first day of absence.
- Where the school is unable to establish the whereabouts of any child absent from school advice will be sought from the Children Missing Officer at the Local Authority.
- Absence is monitored and the parents of any child whose attendance has become a concern will be sent a 'Level 1' letter, together with a leaflet about the Federation's expectations for attendance, followed by a 'Level 2' letter and then a meeting with the Executive Head Teacher.
- Where a child's attendance continues to cause concern a referral to the Targeted Support Service will be made.

## **8. Authorising Absences**

Only the executive head teacher can authorise an absence. Absences will not automatically be classed as authorised even if they are covered by a note from the parent/ carer.

### **Authorising absence for illness**

Any absence for illness will be initially authorised for up to three days with the reason for the absence being recorded in the register.

The schools will contact parents/ carers on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of absence if the child has not returned to school.

Absence that lasts longer than three days will require confirmation that the child has been seen by a doctor in order to be authorised. Parents can confirm this by phoning the school office who will then record the reasons for the continued absence.

### **Absence for Educational Activity**

Absence for educational activity can be approved. This covers supervised activity that takes place away from the school with the school's approval.

Approved educational activity includes:

- Receiving education elsewhere for example at a pupil referral unit or in secure accommodation
- Taking part in a licensed public performance or sports event
- On a field trip or educational visit
- On work experience

### **Example Level 1 letter**

Dear

As you will be aware we monitor children's attendance each term along with the Local Authority. I am concerned about \_\_\_\_\_ current attendance which is at \_\_\_% for this academic year. This is below the Local Authority's threshold for children's attendance at school.

I would be grateful if you could contact school and arrange an appointment to meet with me or Mrs King. There may be ways that we can support \_\_\_\_\_ to raise his/her attendance to above \_\_\_% and we are very happy to discuss this with you.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Best Wishes,

Sally Beaman  
Assistant Head Teacher

## Example Level 2 letter

Dear

Following on from our previous meeting we have been monitoring \_\_\_\_\_attendance. Unfortunately we have not seen the improvement that was needed and attendance has now fallen to \_\_\_\_\_%.

It is now urgent that we meet to agree how best to rapidly improve attendance and I would like to invite you to a meeting with me and a member of the Governing Body on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. It is essential that we are able to agree an attendance improvement plan otherwise I will need to refer this through to Targeted Support at the Local Authority.

Please contact school to confirm that you can attend the meeting.

Best Wishes,

Kathryn King

Executive Head Teacher