

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



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The Kite Primary Federation

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Attendance Statement

The Kite Primary Federation is committed to working with parents and carers and children to ensure every child achieves the highest possible attendance during their time at school. As a LA maintained school we work in partnership with other agencies who can contribute to improving school attendance.

As a Federation 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***. Attendance below 90% is a cause for possible referral to Family Services.

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

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling.

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. The LA is has responsibility for enforcing attendance which they have delegated to the Early Help Case Management Targeted support Service. Legal action may be taken against parents/carers in relevant circumstances using options such as:

- Penalty notices
- School attendance orders
- Section 444(1) and (1) (a) of the Education Act 2002

Children should be at school, on time every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. All absences must be reported to school by **9am** on the first and subsequent days of absence.

The school has an obligation to:

- Record attendance twice a day
- Ascertain the reasons for absence
- 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

The Kite Primary Federation will work with parents from an early stage to resolve any attendance concerns together. If difficulties persist the Federation may refer the child to the Early Help Case Management Team at the LA. They will try to improve attendance working together with parents and the school. If this fails the Officers can use court proceedings to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

3. Register of Attendance

Registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and after lunch break. The codes and their meanings used in the registers are compliant with LA recommendations.

Registers remain open for 15 minutes after the start of school. Children who arrive during this time are marked Late (L). Any children arriving after this time will receive a (U) code indicating unauthorised absence.

Children who are regularly late will be monitored by the school or if deemed necessary by the Behaviour and attendance service.

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. 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.

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

Exceptional circumstances are defined where requests are rare, significant, and unavoidable and short. 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 made in writing and will be considered on an individual basis. The decision will be made 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 an unauthorised absence. If this causes the child/ren to drop into the persistence absenteeism category this will lead to a referral to Early Help Unit.

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

Medical appointments must wherever possible be arranged outside of school hours. Where this is unavoidable an appointment letter must be shown at the school office to enable the medical appointment to be authorised.

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.

School have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence, to the Children Missing In Education Officer (CME).

4. Promoting Good Attendance

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

5. Working with Parents and Carers

- The school will work with parents and carers to endeavour that every child has a good level of attendance. The school will liaise with parents and carers if the DfE threshold for unauthorised absence (10% over a 6 week period) is reached and will offer support to improve this. The school will continue to reward children for good attendance through individual dojos, certificates etc. Parents will be kept up to date about attendance figures for their children and across school through regular text messages, parent's evenings and emails.

Parents and carers can support their children by:

- Making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and the positive impact this has on the child's progress.
- Discussing any problems they may have in school/home if their child is reluctant to come to school. These concerns need to be raised with their class teacher initially.
- Minor ailments can be managed with in school and children are encouraged to attend school. Parents would be contacted throughout the day if the child's condition was to deteriorate.
- Avoiding taking their child out of school during important test times e.g. SATs.

6. Absence Procedure

- It is essential that all contact information is kept up to date in school. All parents/ carers must advise school of any phone or address changes as soon as they occur. Failure to do so may be considered a safeguarding issue.
- Parents must phone school before the start of the school day with absence reasons. It is not acceptable for siblings to explain absences.
- Parents / carers of children who are marked absent in the register where there is no reason given, 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 inviting you to a meeting with school leaders, followed by a 'Level 2' letter and then a meeting with the Executive Head Teacher and the Safeguarding Lead/Attendance Governor. School will liaise with external agencies where deemed necessary/ appropriate to consider supportive measures.
- Where a child's attendance continues to cause concern a referral to the Early Help Unit will be made.

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 4th 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.

Holiday Absence

Amendments made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1st September 2013. These amendments clearly state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Should leave be granted the Head teacher would consider the reason for the leave request and would determine the number of day's absence granted.

If parents chose to take their child out of school for a holiday without authorisation, and the child/ren's level of absence is in excess of 3 days in total over a 6-week period, the school will refer the incident to Family services who will then consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice is £120 per parent per child and is required to be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days on which the notice starts the amount is reduced to £60 per parent per child.

Children at Risk of Missing Education

School governing bodies, academy trusts, and other school proprietors must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides schools with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

When school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Monitoring Attendance

The Federation conducts its own attendance auditing procedure.

Children with attendance falling below 95% are identified and monitored.

Parents/Carers are invited to discuss concerns and determine how we can work together cohesively to resolve issues affecting the child's attendance and performance.

Home Visits may be carried out where attendance is cause for concern.

Where the audit procedure has not worked the child will be referred to the Education Enforcement Officer or issued with a Penalty fine.

Schools are required to report to the LA with termly attendance data. This informs the LA on the progress of schools in improving the overall attendance into line with LA thresholds. From 2007 primary school attendance data has been collected termly as part of the national school census survey which is submitted to the DfES.

Summary

The Kite Primary Federation has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parent and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All staff are committed to working with parents to ensure as high level of attendance as possible.

Policy accepted by the Governing Body of the Kite Primary Federation July 2022