



KENTS HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy reviewed and updated January 2017

To be reviewed September 2017

Statement of Intent

- Kents Hill Junior School is committed to providing a full and beneficial educational experience to all its pupils, if this commitment is to succeed good pupil attendance is imperative
- The School will do all it can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils
- Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed speedily
- Parents have a vital role to play in ensuring that pupils attend School regularly and on time
- Individual parents will be contacted immediately if concerns arise over their child's attendance or punctuality with a view to resolving any problems that may have arisen
- The school will seek immediate advice from the Education welfare Service should queries arise around pupil attendance

Rights and Responsibilities

- The School requires pupils to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn
- The School requires good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality
- The School staff will promote matters of attendance and punctuality
- The School staff will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness
- The School will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible
- The School will include in reports a registration certificate on pupil's attendance at least annually
- Parents must ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time
- Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school
- Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence, **this must be confirmed**

in writing when a child returns to school (consideration, whenever known, will be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or when English is not the first language)

- Parents will be required to present the school with **medical evidence** after the **third day** of a child's absence due to sickness
- If attendance problems do develop, the school requires parents to work actively with school staff to solve them
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record
- Parents do not have a right to take children on holiday in term time (see Leave of Absence Policy)
- If a pupils attendance falls **below 90%** parents will be required to attend a **formal meeting with the headteacher**; all meetings will be documented and minuted.
- Pupils will be **referred to MECES** if their **attendance falls below 85%** in the preceding four weeks and they have 8 or more unauthorised absences. This is the beginning of a legal process that will result in prosecution should attendance not improve.
- If a pupil is absent for 20 sessions (10 days) and the parents have failed to notify the school and the school has been unable to make contact with the parents a missing pupil checklist will be sent to CME.

Registration

Type of Registration and general register maintenance

At Kents Hill Junior School an online registration system is used.

A printed copy of the day's attendance will be kept in the school office in the event of a fire drill.

All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be stored in the school office and retained for the remainder of the term.

Start and Close of Registration

The school will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 30 minutes of the start of the lesson.

Registration begins at 8.50 a.m. and 1.40 p.m. each school day and registers will be closed 30 minutes after these times.

If a pupil arrives after the commencement of the registration period, they will report to reception to be entered onto the electronic entry system.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

Under the Education Pupil Registrations 2006 (R12) deletions from the School Roll must be reported to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, by the school giving reasons for that pupil's removal prior to deletion.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff responsible for processes

- The head teacher is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.
- The administrative team are responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.
- The class teacher is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session.
- The class teacher is responsible for maintenance of their own class register. Including the following :

- ensuring each pupil is called by name when taking the register
- ensuring that symbols used are appropriate
- ensuring all mistakes are advised to the school office so that they can amend the electronic register accordingly

Kents Hill Junior School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then Kents Hill Junior School will contact the parent/carer by telephone. If this does not elicit an explanation of the absence and the absence continues, a Meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher.

This meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved at this meeting then a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer, and a formal intervention planned.

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Where a pupil is persistently late the parent/carer will be invited to a school based meeting.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The DFEE Circular Number 10/99 states that parents may not authorise absence, only Schools can do this. (Please see Leave of Absence Policy)

Absence for the following reasons could be authorised where parents have confirmed the absence in writing on the child's return to school (consideration whenever known, will be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language):

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the head teacher
- Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance

After 3 days of sickness absence the parent/carer will be required to provide medical evidence. The following are examples of acceptable written evidence for sickness absence:

- Appointment cards/letters
- Medical certificate
- Letter from GP
- Prescription certificate
- Medical Slip from office stamped and dated by practitioner

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

In the belief that pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is exciting, relevant and meets their needs the curriculum will be regularly reviewed.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the home school agreement, school prospectus, parent consultation meetings, newsletters and the display of relevant policies on the school website.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used.

Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement.

Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school (please refer to anti-bullying policy, behaviour policy and equal opportunities policy).

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

- Termly celebrations of children who have had a 100% attendance throughout the term
- Improved attendance celebrated for individual pupils

- The class with the best attendance is congratulated weekly in assembly and rewarded by their teacher
- Specific assemblies designed to promote good attendance held each term
- End of academic year letter sent to parents congratulating them on their child's attendance where attendance is 100%
- End of academic year pupils presented with a reward for achieving 100% attendance

Target Setting/Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanisms

- Targets set annually for attendance – these are regularly monitored with reports sent to Head teacher half-termly
- A late letter sent to parents after three lates within two weeks – if no improvement made parents are requested to attend a meeting with the head teacher and a school governor with responsibility for attendance

Our aim is for every child at Kents Hill Junior School to have outstanding attendance in order to benefit from an outstanding education.