



An Active Learning Trust Academy

Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

Kingsfield Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by achieving consistently high attendance and arriving punctually for school, will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on consistently good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring consistently high school attendance – and have important roles to play. Consistently high attendance means striving for 97% and above. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current Government and Local Authority Regulation Guidance. The school will ensure that all members of the full Governing Body know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at Kingsfield Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Team

A member of the Attendance Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The team reports whole school, class and key group attendance figures on a weekly basis to the school's Leadership Team. This team consists of the following members of the school community:

- Paula Candish (Attendance Lead)
- Claudia Stephens (Family Care Worker)
- Yvonne Wadlow (Office)
- Pupil Attendance Champion (Year 6 pupil)
- Pupil Attendance Officer (Year 6 pupil)
- Rachel Green (Attendance Governor)

The team will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly with the Attendance Team, are made available to all staff, pupils and parents/ carers (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. The Attendance Team will keep and maintain a folder which holds the following information:

- the attendance team

- attendance policy
- attendance letters and forms
- newsletters
- attendance data
- impact of attendance group
- case studies

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (see Appendix 1).

Doors to the school will be open between 8.35 – 8.45am.

Registers are taken at 8.45am and are closed at 9.15am.

Afternoon registers are taken at 12.45 in Key Stage One and 1.15 in Key Stage Two.

Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late.

Pupils who arrive between the register being taken and the register closing will be counted as present but will receive a late mark (L) in the register. Any pupil / student who arrives AFTER the closing of the register will receive an unauthorised late mark (U) in the register. If a child is regularly late after the registers have been closed, then a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority, which can result in a fine of £60.00 per parent/ carer per child. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

Registers taken at 8:45m.

If arrive late but before 9:15am a late mark will be given (L).

If arrive late after 9:15am an unauthorised mark will be given (U), which will impact a child's attendance.

The school gates are closed at 9.30am.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure. For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the school office.

Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as having unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the

amendment/ correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school.

Kingsfield Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents/ carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Kingsfield Primary School will therefore challenge parents/ carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- Where the school is satisfied that the child is medically unfit to attend (for example vomiting, diarrhoea. Other examples can be found in the parent/ carer guide to attendance);
 - Medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (school may ask for you to provide evidence of such appointment). Parents/ carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible. Parents/ carers must return their child to school immediately afterwards and send him / her to school beforehand;
 - If the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;
 - In an exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a very limited period agreed at the discretion of the head teacher.
- (See section 5 for further details)

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

3. Collection and analysis of data

The Attendance Team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, parents/ carers and the Governing Body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by classes, year group, reasons for absence and by individual case studies. It is also analysed by Ever 6, pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), pupils with special educational needs, gender and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the Department for Education (DfE) within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a high profile at Kingsfield Primary School and is promoted in the following ways:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in newsletters, pupil progress reports, annual school report;
- Discuss pupils attendance during parents evenings in relation to attainment and progress;
- Contacting parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for good attendance;
- Celebrate outstanding attendance in weekly assembly;
- Celebrate weekly attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and prizes.

Kingsfield Primary School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week, the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Officer (E.W.O) is always phoned immediately.

First-day calling

Kingsfield Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents/ carers will be contacted on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents/ carers' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents/ carers on the first day of absence via a phone call, the school will send a letter or conduct a home visit. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

Meetings with parents/ carers - Attendance Panels

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence the Attendance Team will make the class teachers aware and make contact with parents/carers to discuss the impact of absence on pupils' learning.

If after a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), there is little or no explanation for the absence, the Attendance Team will invite parents/ carers to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents/ carers and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents/ carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Kingsfield Primary School will ask the Local Authority to issue fixed penalty notices in situations where unauthorised absence occurs in the following circumstances:

- Where a pupil has unauthorised absence;
- Where a pupil is given unauthorised late marks;

- Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

The penalty is £60 per child per parent/ carer if paid with 21 days, doubling to £120 per child per parent/ carer if paid after 21 days. If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

5. Leave of Absence

Kingsfield Primary School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant a leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances which are still at the discretion of the Headteacher. Time off school is not a right and there is no automatic entitlement in law for a leave of absence. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended leave of absence. Kingsfield Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

Kingsfield Primary School will only consider authorising a leave of absence in 'exceptional circumstances'; even then this is still at the discretion of the Headteacher:

6. Missing In Education

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by Cambridgeshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family via the school's Family Care Worker.

7. Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of being classified as Missing In Education. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

8. Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is defined as continued or ongoing absence where attendance has dropped below 90%.

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education.

9. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/ carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Kingsfield Primary School.

Kingsfield Primary School expects parents/ carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents/ carers will also be expected to:

- notify Kingsfield Primary School on the first day of absence by notifying the school via phone or email;
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- ensure that their children are willing and ready to learn;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Kingsfield Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

10. Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

11. Governors' responsibilities

The governing body of an academy school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with the Governing Body and Active Learning Trust.

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