



Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS TO ATTENDANCE POLICY

Written March 2019

Section	Governors' Meeting or Committee
Whole Document	LGB 25 th April 2019
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Introduction

Attendance policy this has been re-written due to the new DfE requirements as set out in 'Working together to Improve School Attendance' and a subsequent meeting of attendance officers in MK.

Kents Hill Park School is a successful school and every child on roll plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the school community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Kents Hill Park School pupils are expected to attend school regularly and on time. This policy aims to make clear the importance of maximum attendance at school to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and become confident, independent and forward-thinking adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. This is every child's fundamental right, and every effort will be made to help students to engage in their education in a positive and rewarding way.

In order to achieve this aim, school and home need to work together so that:

1. Students are committed to their education and understand the importance of good attendance;
 - Parents instill in their child the expectation to attend school every day, and support school if it becomes necessary to monitor attendance, as it is their legal duty;
 - School has clear lines of responsibility for dealing with attendance and are consistent in the implementation of the policy, including a wide range of positive intervention strategies if concerns continue.

At Kents Hill Park we recognise that there is a strong connection between attendance and achievement; pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have the higher rates of attendance over the Key Stage, compared to those with the lowest attainment. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor; research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime and serious crime.

Kents Hill Park School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Kents Hill Park School understands that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our practices and policies on curriculum, safeguarding, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing bullying, behaviour and teaching and learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

The Local Governing Body will monitor attendance and be aware of the reasons for change and actions taken.

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Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Parents have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a smaller number of allowable circumstances such as too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Since September 2013 there is no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on a family holiday during term time, and to do so could result in the Local Authority issuing a fixed penalty notice. Schools are open 190 days per year, plus 5 for training days, the remaining days are weekends and school holidays.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Home and School Partnership

Kents Hill Park School wants to take every care to maintain the positive relationship we have with parents and ensure that you feel able to communicate honestly with us without fear of being fined for an absence you feel is justified.

Kent Hill Park School's position:

- No request for holiday absence will be authorised. You may choose to take your child out of school but this will be recorded on your child's attendance record as unauthorised absence.
- If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) over a period of 6-10 week, we are obliged to refer this to the Local Authority and you will be at risk of incurring a Penalty Notice. This risk increases if there are existing concerns relating to your child's attendance and intervention programmes have been in place.
- If your child's attendance falls below 96%, all absences will be monitored and attendance targets will be set for improvement.
- Parents asking for consideration for absence where special circumstances apply will be informed by the Headteacher if this will be authorised.

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The Attendance Lead at Kents Hill Park school is:

Miss Emma Harris

Attendance Officer is:

Mrs Lynn Ettaoussi

Attendance assistant is:

Miss Emma Sadler

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. We seek parents support to:

1. Do all they can to ensure that their child arrives on time for school. Gates open at 8.20am, and we expect all students in Secondary to be in school by 8.35am. At the Primary, gates open at 8.25am for Foundation to Year 3. Gates open 8.35am for years 4-6. Being on time, is a parental duty and we expect parents to support us in encouraging this. Pupils failing to arrive on time will be sanctioned. Arrival 30 minutes later than the start times means your child will be recorded as late after the register closes, which is an unauthorised absence.
2. Nursery children start school at either 08:30 or 12:30 depending on the session they have been allocated. Our Nursery has its own external gate, and parents should ensure they drop their child off on time at the start of their session.
3. Notify the school of their child's absence by using the dedicated absence reporting line 01908 533290 by 8.25am on the day of absence, including Pupil Name and Tutor Group and Reason for Absence.
4. Keep school informed on a daily basis where absence extends to two days or more by use of the absence reporting line. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.
5. Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school. Failing to attend school can be indicative of underlying stress or concerns, and it is important to try to resolve this before a pattern of poor attendance develops. Please contact your child's form tutor or Head of Year in the first instance.

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In return the school will:

1. Email/text home for every pupil who is absent if parents/carers have not already contacted us. We will then make a phonecall to all numbers held on our system until we get a response, even if this means calling the parent's / carer's workplace and having them brought to the phone.
2. Contact home regarding any outstanding unexplained absences.
3. Make home visits on the third day of absence if we have not been contacted by parents/carers. We will contact parents/carers beforehand and explain that we must see their child on the visit.
4. Follow up promptly any concerns that parents' pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of well-being in school.
5. Involve the Pastoral, Safeguarding and SEN Teams to help students re-integrate into school after illness or individual circumstances.
6. Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
7. Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.
8. Work with parents to identify other agencies who might be able to support the child and family. This may involve implementing an Early Help Assessment, or involving Children and Family Practices.
9. Keep parents/carers up to date with attendance information and expectations about school holiday start dates, return to school dates, seasonal illnesses and religious observance dates.
10. Attendance of pupils will be reported to parent/carers on the Interim reports

Absence Categories

Illness: In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill (with details of symptoms) will be acceptable. For illness absences over 3 days, you may be asked to provide medical evidence (this could be a doctor's appointment card, prescription, hospital letter). You may also be asked to provide evidence where there is repeated absence due to reported illness. Kents Hill Park School has a medical lead who can be contacted/could call to gain more information to support a pupil to attend school despite an illness.

Where a pupil has 15 days or more absence due to a health need, the school will support the pupil in a variety of ways through the school's EBSA (Emotional Based School Avoidance) guidance and process. All Milton Keynes children who are unable to attend school because of health reasons (both mental and physical health), which have been recognised by the health services, should not be at home or in hospital without access to education for more than 15 days in an academic year. Therefore, a partnership approach to resourcing will be necessary between the school and the Local Authority. For some cases of absence, the School will complete a Section 19 referral to the Local Authority. The Local Authority takes responsibility. The school will ensure the pupil has access to several online learning platforms for core subjects during their absence

Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances: This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

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Fixed Term Exclusion (No alternative provision made): A fixed term exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

Late arrival: Lesson 1 begins at 08:35 (Years 7-11), 08:35 (Foundation, 1, 2 and 3) and 8.45 (Years 4, 5 and 6). Pupils arriving after this time, will be marked as present but arriving late and must register in the school's main reception. The register will close 30 mins later. Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as late (after the register closed) which will be an unauthorised absence for that session.

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

Family Holidays and Extended Leave: Holiday during term time will not be authorised. Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. If permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the School Attendance, Education Sufficiency and Access department at Milton Keynes Council who may issue a Penalty Notice (Anti-social Act 444 (1) 2003). Only in exceptional circumstances will absence be agreed. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances.

Religious Observance: Kents Hill Park School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year.

Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. If your child has less than 90% attendance they will be categorised as PA or persistently absent. If attendance falls below 50% attendance will be categorised as SA severe absence.

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If your child takes too much time off school they will be categorised as PA or persistently absent.

Missing school will impact on their academic progress and achievement as they will fall behind in lessons. The table below shows how many missed days each half term will make your child a PA student.

HOW MANY DAYS OFF WILL MAKE YOUR CHILD A PA STUDENT?		Days per term	Total
Autumn 1	September to October half-term	3.5	3.5
Autumn 2	November to Christmas Holidays	3	7
Spring 1	January to February half-term	3	10
Spring 2	February return to Easter Holidays	3	13
Summer 1	Easter Holidays return to May half-term	3	16
Summer 2	June to end of term in July	3	19

Traveller Absence: The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Milton Keynes, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Kents Hill Park School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at Kents Hill Park School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Kents Hill Park School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

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Kents Hill Park School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school;
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service;
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- When a parent informs the school in writing that the pupil is to be withdrawn to be educated outside the school system – Elected Home Education.
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- Kents Hill Park School will follow Milton Keynes Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a Pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every fortnight the Attendance Officer will provide all HOYs/ Assistant Headteacher with attendance data for the previous five weeks for each pupil within their Key Stage/Year Group whose attendance is under 90%.

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This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Kents Hill Park School will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and are GDPR compliant.

Support Systems

Kents Hill Park School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce and separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Kents Hill Park School recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with a social worker, those with family members in prison, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and children in care.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies, including Arthur Ellis, CAMHs, Mental Health Support Team, School Nurse, Young Persons Sanctuary MK
- Early Help Assessment, and referral to Childrens and Family Practices
- ESBA process (Emotionally Based School Avoidance)
- Referral to the pastoral and learning mentors
- Intervention with friendship groups – including restorative meetings
- Time limited part-time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Use of the inclusion room - Thrive
- Reintegration support package

Parent/pupil attendance contracts.

- A Notice to Improve -a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage in support and improve their child's attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

Support offered to families will be child centered and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Governors:

The Local Governing Body will:

- Monitor attendance data and be aware of reasons for change and the action taken.
- Be aware of the action plans and progress towards reducing the number of persistent absentees.

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Legal Sanctions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, Kents Hill Park School will notify the School Attendance, Education Sufficiency and Access department at Milton Keynes Council of the irregular attendance.

Kents Hill Park School may invite parents to attend an attendance interview and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts: (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority (LA), school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Education Supervision orders

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal parenting contract has not been successful, an Educational Supervision Order (ESO) may be implemented, as a way of providing formal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, and give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent to ensure that the parent receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time. Review meetings involving all parties will be held every 3 months whilst the ESO is in force.

Where parents persistently fail to comply with the conditions of the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence, and may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

Fixed Penalty Notices: (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- Intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupils absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- Parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion.

As of September 2024, the Penalty Notice is a £80 fine, per parent/carer, per child and must be paid within 21 days of issue. The fine increases to £160 per parent/carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent/carer in respect to the same child is charged at a flat rate of £160. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Once three years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, this would be the most effective tool for charging what now may have become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

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Where a pupil has moved schools, an additional check should be made by the Local Authority/School to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued in respect of the pupil.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

The section 444 (1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1000) and the section 444 (1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2500) and/or a community order



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