

Kidsgrove Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2018-2019

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Introduction

Kidsgrove Primary School is committed to providing all our pupils with a full, quality education. For a pupil to achieve his/her full potential at our school, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils in the school but would expect a pupil to miss no more than 4% of sessions in an academic year through unavoidable absence such as illness or exceptional circumstances. We regularly remind parents of the importance of regular and punctual attendance, through a variety of means such as newsletters, our website and conversations with parents and pupils. We feel at the school we have a central role to play in every child's social, spiritual and moral development. We ensure this by promoting honesty, respect, determination and trust as identified by the children, staff and governors. These values underpin this policy and its related practices.

School Aims

Kidsgrove Primary School aims to enable all children the opportunity to achieve their best academically, emotionally and socially through:

- Providing high quality learning to enable children to acquire the skills, knowledge and concepts relevant to their future;
- Promoting an ethos of care, mutual respect and support, where effort is valued and success celebrated;
- Enabling children to become active, responsible and caring members of the school and wider community;
- Promoting high quality learning and exceptional attainment;
- Providing high quality curriculum entitlement and a high quality learning environment;
- Promoting the school's values to enable the children to value themselves and each other.

Attendance Policy Aims

- To ensure all pupils take full advantage of opportunities for learning in school.
- To ensure the well-being and safety of children at the Kidsgrove Primary School.
- To set school targets for attendance (96%).
- To monitor pupil absence and the reasons.

Attendance Policy Intentions

- To actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all pupils. Parents/carers are kept regularly updated on their child's attendance percentage.
- To monitor regular or extended absence and take steps to resolve this.
- To work with EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and engage the Family Support Worker to ensure no child is absent without school being aware of the reason.
- To ensure that discretionary power to grant leave is only used in exceptional circumstances.
- To use the School Information Management System (Sims) to analyse and monitor pupils' patterns of absence and work with parents to rectify this.

Strategies to promote attendance at school

- Pupil attendance is carefully tracked by the school's Business Support Assistant and Head of School.
- Each Friday, the class with the highest attendance has a special mention on the Head of School's newsletter.
- Each Monday, the best attending Year group will receive a special mention in assembly.
- Pupils with 100% attendance receive a certificate each term.
- Attending school daily will be recognised with merits.
- Display is used to raise pupils' awareness and to help them aspire to reach their target.
- Parent learning opportunities are created to ensure that they understand the link between good attendance and punctuality and educational outcomes.
- Attendance information is shared regularly with all parents at progress evenings and via letter where attendance is a cause for concern.
- Engagement of the Family Support Worker and Education Welfare Workers to support families where poor attendance is an issue.

Teaching and Learning Impact

Kidsgrove Primary School will endeavour to reduce the disruption to children's learning through unnecessary absence and will work with families towards avoiding lateness or avoidable time off from school.

Equality and Inclusion

All children will be dealt with in the same manner. Allowances within this policy will be made for children with severe disabilities or illnesses who require additional time off for administration or medication.

Safeguarding

If a child is absent for any reason unknown to the school, parents or carers must contact the school office in some way before 8.45 am on the first day of absence. A text message will be sent or phone call made to the parents/carers of any child who is not in school and school has not received a message about their child's absences.

Registration of pupils

Kidsgrove Primary School will ensure that staff are aware of any new legislation with pupil registration. Registers are to be completed accurately at the beginning of every session i.e. morning and afternoon. Morning registers close at 9.00am. Parents/carers should call to report an absence by 8.45am at the latest.

Senior Managers and School Governors have a responsibility to ensure evaluation of attendance procedures. Regular reports will be provided for the Governing Body of Kidsgrove Primary School.

Contents of the Attendance Register

Each class teacher will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. On each occasion they will record whether every pupil is present or absent. The school will follow up any absences to:

1. Ascertain the reason;
2. Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
3. Identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and,
4. Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Absence Procedures

All absences will be recorded on school registers using the national codes attached. Any pupil who is on role but not present in school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence - This is for pupils where no reason has been given or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This can occur if a child arrives after 9:30am.
2. Authorised Absence - This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. Approved Educational Activity - This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken offsite but with the approval of the school.

Children who arrive late to school (after 9:00am) must enter the building via the main entrance and will be signed in by the Business Support Assistant. If they arrive after registers have closed (9.00am) they will receive a late mark in the register; accompanied with the number of minutes late the child was. A record of late minutes is kept for individual children and the same procedure for absence is followed if the minutes late a child is raises concern. If pupils arrive after 9.30am then they receive an unauthorised absence mark.

Reporting Absences

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform school of any reasons for a child's absence, before 8.45 am, each day that they are absent from school (unless otherwise arranged with school) and to provide further information as required. The process for notification is included as part of the school's prospectus and indicates a phone call or contact on the first day of absence. We will telephone requesting information if an explanation has not been received. We will refer the matter to Attend EDC Education Welfare Officers if no response is forthcoming.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

As of 1 September 2013 there has been a change in the **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**. Where there used to be the option for Principals to grant leave of absence during the term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten days in a year, **this has been removed**. Principals are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance".

What should parents do if they wish to request a leave of absence?

Parents should contact the school to find out how to make a request for permission. We would strongly recommend that this is done before planning any leave of absence.

What happens if a child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the school?

The absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child being issued by the Local Authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year. In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child. The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From 1st January 2018 **ANY** period of unauthorised leave may result in parents receiving a penalty notice fine. The headteacher will continue to be the only person able to authorize leave in term time, but this will only apply in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the headteacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. This has now **changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If a child has had **10 days** unauthorised absence or is late **10 times** over a twelve-week period, parents may receive a penalty warning notice and potentially a fine.

Schools and EWOs in Staffordshire adhere to the 'Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices Sept 2017'.

Medical Appointments

Parents of children attending a medical appointment during the school day need to produce an appointment card/letter or similar paperwork prior to the appointment. Where possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. We can then confirm lateness as a 'medical' absence and therefore authorised.

Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is the responsibility of the Head of School. Attendance is managed day-to-day by the administration staff in conjunction with the Family Support Worker. The School administrator maintain a record of children's attendance rates and reasons for absence. Mrs. Hancock meets weekly with Head of School to discuss the children whose attendance is causing concern. Mrs. Hancock works with families to improve attendance where this is required. In addition to 'in-house' roles the Kidsgrove Primary School works closely with the Local Support Team and ATTEND to discuss individual cases and decide on appropriate next steps, hold 'late-gates' and look at whole-school improvements or concerns relating to attendance statistics.

Summary

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

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The SLT monitor the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis through consultation with children, teaching staff and parents/carers representatives. The SLT then reports to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.