

Keelby Primary Academy



Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Keelby Primary Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school and on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and Academy Improvement Committee (AIC) at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.

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- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to FS children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Local Authority so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the LA any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Principal.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Principal where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the LA re issuing fixed penalties
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the LA
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Principal
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

- All the school doors open at 8.45 until 9am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.
- Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance.
- Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

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- The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05am and by 1.05pm
- The registers are completed electronically on SIMS and checked by the office
- Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used

Lateness

- Once the doors are closed at 9am the only way to get into school is via the school office.
- Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9am will be marked as late in the attendance record.
- Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil.
- Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence.
- Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.
- Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

- Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence.
- When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.
- All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer.
- It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence.
- This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- The Principal has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

First Day Contact

- Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process.
- Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent.

- There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.
- Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence.
- This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.
- We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

- With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of head teachers and Principals to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist.
- Instead, Principals will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.
- These circumstances must be detailed on the leave of absence form obtained from the Academy office prior to the holiday, as retrospective consent cannot be given.
- Evidence in support of these circumstances must also be provided to the academy when the leave of absence form is submitted - for example, a doctor's or health professional's certificate in support of a family crisis or a serious illness.

How the school gets the message of the importance over to parents, children and the community and supports good attendance:

- The school's position on attendance is included in news letters and reminders to the parents.
- Letters are sent out to parents of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils urging them to avoid children's absences during SATs dates. This message is reiterated at any key stage SATs meetings for parents.
- The principal meets with parents of children new to the school and, within this introduction to the school, talks about with attendance expectations and the parents' and school's responsibilities.
- Children see and hear the register taken clearly each day.
- Weekly assemblies celebrate high attendance in a class; end of term assemblies celebrate high individual attendance.

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- Governors set and regularly review the attendance policy.
- The principal presents termly reports to the governing body including attendance figures.
- If a child is absent from registration without a known reason, the office will use the home or mobile phone number to reach the parent/guardian.
- There are frequent positive mentions about attendance in assemblies.
- We seek at all times to make this school a place of exciting learning that children enjoy attending and can see the benefits.
- The school strives at all times to make parents feel at ease in approaching members of staff with problems both in and out of school which may well impact on attendance.
- Often children who have an attendance problem are offered support as part of their Individual Learning Passport (ILP).

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%. Any child with low attendance (below 90%) will be addressed via the following process.

- It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Principal and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.
- In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.
- Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home.
- There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.
- Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices

- Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The amendments, as described below, came into force on 1st September 2013.
- The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's/children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents/Carers must now pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

To ensure the consistent application of the penalty notice provisions, penalty notices will **ordinarily** be issued where the following criteria are met:

- Where there are 10 sessions (5 school days) recorded as unauthorised absence due to a holiday in term time or
- Where a child has at least 20 sessions (10 school days) recorded as unauthorised absence during the previous 14 weeks and the pupil has failed a 15 day warning period or
- Where a child who has been excluded is present in a public place during the first 5 days without reasonable justification
- Penalty notices will only be issued within the terms of conduct. The Local Authority is responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in the area of Lincolnshire.
- In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Monitoring Attendance

- Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is recorded accurately on the SIMs attendance software.
- Regular meetings are held with the Principal to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Date: September 2019

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