

Attendance Policy and Procedure

Kintbury St Mary's CE Primary School



Approved by: KSM Governing Board

Date: April 2020

Last reviewed on: April 2020

Next review due by: Summer 2022

1. Procedure to be followed by parents and carers:

1.1. General procedure

Children must be in school by 8.45am. Registers are taken at 8.50am to allow enough time for the children to put their things away in the cloakrooms.

If their child is to be absent from school, parents and carers must notify the school by 9.30am on that day. They should do so by telephone, and will be given the option to leave a voicemail by the automated answering service. Parents should avoid using emails as a means to inform the school of a child's absence, as the office staff is not always able to check emails in the busy early part of the morning.

If a child is absent for more than one day, parents or carers must ring the school every day to confirm that their child is still off sick, unless the school has been notified in advance of a fixed period of absence (for example, when a doctor has indicated a child should not attend school for a fixed period of time).

The school ask that parents are mindful of their child's school attendance when arranging medical appointment and that they try, whenever possible, to arrange these after school or during school holidays.

1.2. Request for leave of absence from school during term time.

Education is a once in a lifetime opportunity and the DFE has recommended that holidays should not be taken in term time. This school follows Government guidance when deciding whether to authorise holidays during term time and may utilise the right to administer Fixed Penalty Fines (FPFs). The DFE guidance states:

*The West Berkshire Council Code of Conduct in relation to Fixed Penalty Fines (FPFs) has been amended to take account of recent legislation changes which take effect on **1st September 2013**. Currently, Head teachers may grant leave of absence for the purposes of a family holiday of up to ten school days per year. The new legislation removes this, stating instead that head teachers may not grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.*

The New Code sets out 3 circumstances in which a Fixed Penalty Fine may be issued. These are:

- 1. Where a pupil is present in a public place during the first 5 days of being excluded from school*
- 2. Where the pupil has had 10 or more school days of unauthorised absence within any 10 week school period*
- 3. Where a pupil has had 5 or more school days of unauthorised absence in a 10 week school period and the unauthorised absence relates to a planned leave of absence e.g. holiday*
*Where a FPF is issued after 1st September 2013, payment will now be £60 if paid within 21 days. If not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If payment is not made within 28 days, the Council will proceed with formal legal action which may result in a fine of up to **£1000 and a criminal record**.*
Please note the Council is unable to accept payment by instalments for FPFs.

The full Code of Conduct is available to view on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk (Education Welfare Service), School Attendance and Exclusions), and schools will be distributing revised leaflets shortly.

Holidays in term time have a serious detrimental impact on a student's education and can be damaging to an individual's development in school and educational chances.

Holidays in term time are not a right and should not automatically be granted. Examples where approval will not be granted include, but are not limited to:

- Requests for holidays during SATs week or examination weeks. Parents should check examination dates.
- Requests for long weekends and 'odd' days off in term time or holidays which overlap at the beginning and end of terms.
- Requests due to cheaper availability in term time of desired resort/accommodation.
- Requests as a result of poor weather negatively impacting holiday plans in school holidays
- Requests based on children's excellent attendance prior to submitting a leave of absence request.

Any absence taken where a request has been refused by the Head Teacher, the absence will be recorded as "Unauthorised Absence". Such unauthorised holiday absence may result in a fixed penalty fine and legal action through a Magistrate's court. Fixed Penalty Fines are issued per parent per child.

Parents and carers are advised not to make any booking before ascertaining if the proposed holiday can be authorised. If parents and carers feel their application for a holiday falls within the exceptional circumstances criteria, they should complete the **Request for Leave of Absence From School During Term Time** form and return to the school **at least three weeks** before the proposed leave.

When holiday is taken in term time, whether authorised or not, it is our policy not to provide the child with the work which is planned for his/her group during this period of absence. The teacher will, if possible, try to make up work that has been missed on your child's return to school. If parents wish their child to continue with some school type activity while on holiday we suggest that he/she keeps a personal diary or record of the holiday. On return to school the pupil will be encouraged to work hard to compensate for the gap in their education. This may require the completion of additional work following teaching input.

2. Procedures to be followed by school staff:

2.1. Taking the Register:

Registers must be taken at 8.50am every morning, and as soon as possible in the afternoons.

Registers should be marked in ink: (black or blue for present, red circle for absent). The class teacher must leave the red circle blank if they have not yet been advised of the reason for absence, or use the relevant code if they know the reason for absence. This is to avoid unnecessary phone calls from the office staff to parents or carers.

The most common attendance marks are as follows:

/ am \ pm	=	Present
L	=	Arriving before end of registration
U	=	Arriving after end of registration
I	=	Absent through illness
M	=	Absent due to visit to doctor/dentist
C	=	Special circumstances agreed with the school
V	=	Educational visit
O	=	Unauthorised absence

Please refer to the appendix for a full list of codes and their meaning.

Class registers must distinguish clearly between authorised and unauthorised absences, as termly and annual totals must be reported to the DfE and the Educational Welfare Officer.

2.2. Transfer of information:

Data from the class registers is transferred every morning into the 'Attendance' module in SIMS by the office staff. If no code has been provided for a child's absence, the office staff will ring parents or carers to check the reason for absence. If parents or carers notify the office staff that their child will be absent for a number of days, the office staff will complete the register for the period.

If parents do not respond to the initial phone call or do not have a valid reason for absence the office staff will follow up. If parents or carers do not provide a reason for absence by the time their child returns to school, The Head Teacher will send a first letter. If no response is received within 7 days, then a second standard letter will be sent.

As a general rule the school should try to get a satisfactory reason for the absence within ten working days of the first day of absence. If after this time no satisfactory reason has been given (even though the child may now be in school) then the Head Teacher will make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

The school has a duty to alert the education Welfare Service to migratory, missing or removed children.

2.3. Monitoring procedures:

- a) The EWO has overall responsibility for monitoring Attendance Registers.
- b) The EWO visits the school each term to monitor attendance and marking of registers.
- c) Termly and annual attendance figures will be sent to the DfE and LA, as part of the national and local monitoring of attendance.

2.4. Role of the Local Authority:

The LA carries out the role of supporting schools and parents in the area of attendance by means of the Education Welfare Service.

2.5. Legal measures to tackle concerns about school attendance:

The Education Welfare Service may consider the use of legal action in relation to school non-attendance. The Local Authority may initiate proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act. This allows the LA to prosecute (under s.444 of the Education Act) parents for failing to ensure that their child receives an efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. This could result in parents being fined.

2.6. Policy review

This policy will be monitored by the Head Teacher and Governors and will be reviewed by the governing board within 2 years.

Reviewed and approved by the F & R committee on 1st April 2020 and ratified by the Governing Board on 29th April 2020.

Next Review Date: Summer 2022