



POLICY ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Introduction

To ensure that children receive and have access to the best education possible and to be able to fulfil their potential, it is essential that they attend school regularly and punctually. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular attendance is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+	Excellent – Well done! This will help with all aspects of their progress and life in school.
94-95%	Average – Strive to build on this.
90-94%	Not good- ensure that this does not continue
85-90%	Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
Below 85%	Unacceptable – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It IS affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the Education Welfare Officer [EWO] to improve your child's attendance.

Aims

- To enable children to gain maximum benefit from the educational opportunities offered to them at school.
- To promote continuity and progression in the learning process through regular and sustained access to the Curriculum.

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- To ascertain the whereabouts of absentees to ensure, as far as possible, their safety and well-being.
- To endorse and underline the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and to recognise that poor attendance and punctuality can have a detrimental effect on social, emotional and educational development.

We will

- Celebrate success
- Monitor attendance rates and offer support to families where issues are arising
- Keep and maintain accurate records
- Liaise with partners, including Education Welfare Officer

Expectations, Role and Responsibilities

School Staff

The teacher in charge of a class must accurately take a register of attendance at the school agreed times and in accordance with the agreed method

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session. Kingshill Church School adheres to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

A designated member of the staff on the first day will, if no reason for the absence is known, call to ascertain this information.

The Headteacher (or designated member of senior staff) will regularly monitor attendance and contact parents when concerns arise.

Parents

It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure that the child attends school. This includes being punctual. When a child is absent it is the parents' responsibility to inform the school at the earliest possible occasion. Parents sign a Home-School Agreement to confirm that they will ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives at the correct time each day.

Governors

Governors have a responsibility to have an overview of the school's attendance and to monitor this. They are to act as a critical friend and determine targets and the impact of the attendance policies and approaches.

School Responsibility - THE LAW and School Attendance

Absence during Term Time – with effect from 1st September 2013

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force on

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1 September 2013. These amendments make clear that Head teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances*. Parents do not have the automatic right to withdraw pupils from school and in law have to apply for permission in advance. The school will always want to discuss this with parents personally.

Following guidance from the Bath & Wells MAT (Multi Academy Trust) and in line with North Somerset Local Authority and to create a consistent approach for schools, the following reasons may support an application for absence in term time:

- Forces Personnel home from a foreign posting;
- **Exceptional significant** family events or circumstances - these will be considered on an individual basis with you. Where the event is a weekday family wedding, **only** the day of the wedding will be agreed.

The Head teacher will consider every above request individually but the following will **not usually** meet the criteria:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family and friends that have different half term holidays
- Attendance at weddings and visiting family abroad

Parents/Carers are required to complete a Pupil Absence Request for Exceptional Circumstances and a **clear reason for the request** must be given. This should ideally be done well in advance of the requested date and before any holiday booking takes place. Leave even for exceptional reasons **will not be** granted if a child's current and/or previous year's attendance is below the school target of **96%**.

- If absence is taken without permission from the Headteacher, this will be recorded as **unauthorised** in the school register and on the school attendance computerised records. A referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service together with a request for the Education Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice when there are at least 10 unauthorised sessions over a six month period (excluding summer holidays only).
- The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters. Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.

Absence known to be for the following reasons **would** be authorised:

- Illness (if this is frequent or long term then useful evidence would be copies of prescriptions and medical appointments)

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- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

When it has become necessary to make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer [EWO], all further absences will be unauthorised pending investigation. The EWO liaises with the school regarding absences following contact with the parents. Further guidance regarding term-time leave and details of the Penalty Notice process may be obtained from the EWO responsible to this school.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Penalty notices can also be issued if the parent or carer of an excluded pupil fails to ensure that their child is not in public during the first five days of exclusion.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 introduce changes to the procedures for issuing penalty notices with effect from 1 September 2013. The amendments reduce the timescale for paying a penalty notice from 28 days to 21 days (£60 initial penalty notice), and from 42 days to 28 days where the initial fine has not been paid (penalty increased to £120). This allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions. **Each** parent/carers can be issued with a penalty notice of £60 for **each** child for unauthorised absence if paid within 21 days, or £120 for **each** child if paid within 28 days. Non-payment will result in the Education Welfare Service considering prosecution.

Guidelines

The school will adopt the following procedures for maintaining and monitoring records of attendance and punctuality:

- ScholarPack (Schools Information Management System) Attendance Register is used to record pupil attendance and punctuality. The Attendance Codes used are those approved by the DfE.
- Registers will be monitored regularly and any pattern of non-attendance, lateness, sustained absence or undue absence will be referred to the Head teacher and/or the school's Education Welfare Officer.
- Registers will be made available for inspection by the Education Welfare Officer, the MAT trustees, the MAT CEO and Director of Learning and school inspectors.
- Attendance falling below 90% will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer. Where the reason for poor attendance is not seen as justifiable or reasonable, this will be followed up with a letter and or/home visit by the Education Welfare Officer and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Arrival and Registration

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- All children should be in the school ready to line up on the playground at 8 45 am each day. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as two attendances. Morning registration ends at 8 55 am. If a child arrives after the registration period, s/he must report to the school office and will be marked in as 'Late'. The school gate will be locked at 9 am. Afternoon registration takes place at 1 15 pm. Arrival after 9 15 am or after 1 30 pm, for the afternoon session, is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Children arriving after registration has closed due to attending an appointment (medical/dental/opticians etc), will be recorded with an "Authorised Absence" for the whole session. Children **leaving school after registration** has taken place for such appointments retain their "Present" mark for the whole session.

Illness and Medical Appointments

- When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9 am on the first day of absence, informing the school of the reason for absence. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent/carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.
- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- Pupils will not be allowed to leave the school premises during session time unless they are collected by their parent/carer, or their named responsible representative.
- If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for **the next 48 hours** after the last time that the child is sick/had diarrhoea. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- For **more than three days** of absence the school requires a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced
- Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days.
- Any child accumulating 12 school days (24 sessions) of authorised absence due to illness within an academic year (consecutively or non-consecutively) will be required to provide sight of relevant medical evidence to support every absence due to illness from day 13 onwards. This is to ensure that the school is appropriately meeting the individual child's educational needs.

Parental Responsibility

- Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent, both parents, or carer with whom the child resides. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole.

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- Attendance will be discussed with each parent at consultation evenings, with the current percentage attendance being reported. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full time education.

Parents/carers are requested to follow the procedures below:

1. Notify the school before 9 am if their child is unable to attend for any reason; the school office opens at 8 am each day.
2. Encourage good attendance and punctuality. Children should aim to arrive at school at 8 40 am and be ready for registration at 8 50 am.
3. Report to the school office if their child arrives late (i.e. after 9 am) or needs to be collected prior to the end of the school session.
4. Pupils arriving late must report to the school office with their parent/carer upon arrival and should not be “dropped off” or left to come into school on their own.
5. Notify the school in person, by telephone or in writing of appointment times and ensure that their child attends school before and after the appointment. Absence will only be authorised for the duration of the appointment time and travel. Children should not be absent for whole sessions to attend appointments unless this is unavoidable due to the nature of the appointment.
6. Children must be collected by the parent/carer, or their named responsible representative, if it is necessary for them to leave school during session time.

Review

This policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for policy review.

Reviewed June 2016

Review date June 2017

**Jan Thomson
Headteacher**