



Reflecting the Kingdom of God by Enriching and Transforming Lives

Attendance and Punctuation Policy

Date Agreed: Spring Term 2024

**Review Date: Spring Term 2025
(or as required)**

Love Wisdom Joy Peace

Based on Royal Borough of Kingston Attendance Policy for Primary Schools (2015)

During Covid-19 government regulations, there will be variations of staggered starts and finish times to accommodate social distancing measures.

INTRODUCTION

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and for establishing a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent, inform the school of the reasons for absence.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- Meet the target set by the school Governing Body of 97% attendance.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

WHY DOES ATTENDANCE MATTER?

- The Education Act 1996 (S7), requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the School's Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents/carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on their child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents/carers, together with school staff, all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. In essence, there are two main categories of absences:

Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. This includes; **▪ Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.**

- **Absences which have never been properly explained.**

- **Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays etc.**
- **Leave taken during term time which is not deemed exceptional, and agreed by the head teacher.**

Repeated absences will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and may be referred to the EWO.

- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised, e.g. a medical certificate may be required.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above are to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents/carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.
- The Local Authority monitors attendance through Education Welfare Officers, who visit the school each half term.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

While parents have primary responsibility in ensuring their children attend school regularly, the school can help parents in their efforts to achieve maximum attendance of their children. This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible. Here are the responsibilities that schools and parents/carers have in promoting good attendance:

1) School's responsibilities:

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school by 9.15am, initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To monitor patterns in persistent lateness or absence.

- To work with parents/carers whose children are persistent absentees (attendance below 90%)
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and support their work with pupils as necessary. The EWO visits the school to check records every half term.
- To report attendance figures to Achieving for Children, Kingston, on a half termly basis.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.

2) Parents' responsibilities:

- To have children in school ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.50am.
- To inform the school by 9.15am on every day of any absence.
- To make applications for leave, in writing, on the school's 'Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances' form, giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and EWO to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents/carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.
- Talk to the school administrator responsible for attendance.

3) The role of the EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER:

- The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.
- Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."
- The Education Welfare Service attendance framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems

become apparent. The service involves engaging the parent where attendance is below the Persistent Absenteeism rate of 90% and specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time frame. If no improvement is made then the Education Welfare Officer may invite parents to an Attendance Improvement Meeting to make decisions about the next course of action, which may include initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court.

4) School governors:

- It is the Governors' legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school's Office Administrative staff will log instances of absence and lateness and monitor weekly. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will send an initial letter to the parents/carers.
- Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer and the Headteacher.
- Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, Headteacher and the EWO.
- Stage 4: If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.

Family holidays and extended leave:

- Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time
- Amendments to the 2006 pupil Registration Regulations, which came into force in September 2013, removed references to family holiday and extended leave. These amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If parents request absence due to exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. All requests for this absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:
 - a. The expected date of return
 - b. That the parents must contact school should any delays occur

- c. If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2013. This means that the child may lose their school place.
- If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student misses school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service for legal action.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We promote good attendance throughout our school by:

- Attendance data for each class is updated on the school website homepage monthly and end the end of a term.
- Awarding a cup in Celebration Assembly each week to the class with the highest attendance.
- Awarding certificates to individual children who have 100% attendance each term.
- Including a question about Malden Parochial's effectiveness at promoting good attendance in the annual Parent/Carers Survey.
- Keeping in regular contact with parents/carers where their child's attendance has fallen below 90%.

LATENESS

Punctuality is an important life skill that your child is expected to have, in order to achieve and to succeed. It is also polite and respectful to be punctual.

- Children must be in school by 8.50am each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school gates will be shut by 9am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will sign in on the Inventory system.
- Lateness will be monitored by the school and repeated lateness will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and may be referred to the EWO.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.00am, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.
- Please be advised that, where possible, doctors' and dentists' appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be equally as serious as absence. If more than six late arrivals within one full month (pro rota) are recorded, the parents/carers will be contacted by letter.

- If lateness persists, the Headteacher will request a meeting with the parents/carer.

Sickness

- Please notify the school by 9.15am on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Pupils suffering from vomiting and/or diarrhoea should stay at home for 48 hours to prevent spreading sickness.