



KING'S OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2021

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Policy reviewed and approved by: Governing Body

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This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

At King's Oak Primary we believe that, in order for every pupil to fulfil their potential, excellent attendance and punctuality are essential. This helps to foster a love of learning and allows maximum academic progress to be made. We believe that poor attendance and punctuality can seriously affect a child's attainment, progress, enjoyment of school and ultimately their life chances. We take the issue of poor attendance and punctuality very seriously and put a number of measures in place to support families. We also understand our responsibilities relating to CME (Children Missing Education) and that poor punctuality, poor attendance or patterns of poor attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding issues. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy.

The legal **minimum** attendance requirement for children of school age is 90%. Any child whose attendance falls below this is classed as a persistent absentee and referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer. However, we consider anything under 96% as poor attendance. Although children below the age of 5 years are below statutory school age, excellent attendance at this age is encouraged as it nurtures good habits for the future. It is our expectation that, once allocated a place in our Nursery or Reception, parents/carers are committed to using it to the full despite their child being younger than statutory school age.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

- Medical appointments may be authorised wherever possible although medical appointments should be made outside school times. Children are expected to attend school before and after medical appointments.
- A day of religious observance may be authorised although the school may seek confirmation of this from the religious body concerned.
- Illness may be authorised although, if overall attendance falls below 90% then medical evidence will be requested by the school in the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or letters from doctors/hospitals (in the case of longer term periods of absence related to medical conditions, measures will be put into place to support learning at home).
- Medical evidence will also be requested if the illness occurs before or after a holiday period.
- Requests for absence (other than illness or medical appointments) must be made by a parent/carer two weeks in advance, by completing an Absence Request Form.
- Absence for holiday during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher will consider each case on an individual basis. The parent/carer will be informed of the outcome.
- Where absence (other than illness or medical appointments) has been authorised by the Headteacher, if the child is absent for more than the time stated by the Headteacher, those days will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If a child is excluded for any amount of time, it is our policy that we will provide work for that child to do at home so that their education is disrupted as little as possible.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices can be used in the following specific circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any five week period, including persistent unauthorised absence and unauthorised holidays in term-time.
- Unauthorised delayed return from extended holidays of more than 5 days.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) equivalent to 10 sessions in any five week period.

There are two levels of penalty notice:

- £60 fine, per resident 'parent' per child, if paid within 21 days.
- £120 fine, per resident 'parent' per child, if paid later than 21 but within 28 days.

The Local Authority collects the payment. Parents/carers can be prosecuted by the Local Authority if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

There is no right to appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If parents/carers believe that a Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued in error, they should contact the school immediately on receiving the Fixed Penalty Notice.

Consideration will be given to payment options (e.g. payment plan) where there is evidence that parents/carers face financial hardship.

Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality

- All staff will model excellent attendance and punctuality.
- All staff will praise children for good attendance and encourage children to attend school.

Tackling poor attendance

First and foremost, we focus on building strong relationships with pupils and families so that trust is established and honest communication and support can take place.

- If a child's attendance is poor, in the first instance the class teacher will speak to the parent/carer and stress the importance of their child having regular attendance. Support will be offered to improve attendance.
- If a child is absent from school it is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform the school via the absence phone line. Messages should include details of the child's illness or specific reason for absence.
- If a message is not received by 10:00 a.m. or no reason is given, the admin team will contact the parents/carers to find out why and this will be recorded on SIMS.
- If any absence or a child's percentage attendance raises safeguarding concerns, the admin team will inform the CPO immediately and the CPO will follow procedures, liaising

with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), outside agencies (e.g. Social Worker or Family Support Worker) and social care, as appropriate.

- When a child's absence level falls below 96%, the parent/carer will be invited to a School Attendance Meeting, to discuss barriers to attendance and whether additional support is required by the family (see flow chart - page 9).
- Once a child's attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence for all future absences.
- If there are further unauthorised absences, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will write to inform the parent/carer that their child is at risk of Persistent Absence. A further school attendance meeting will be offered with the EWO and/or Headteacher.
- If a child's attendance dips below the legal minimum of 90% they are classed as a persistent absentee. Attendance is monitored and further unauthorised absence could result in a First Court Warning or a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If a child has unauthorised absences during the monitoring period the parent/carer will be invited to a Legal Attendance Meeting. This is chaired by the Family and Youth Support Manager and attended by the EWO and a member of school SLT.
- Support from school for parents/carers/families to improve attendance may include:
 - daily contact, weekly meetings
 - helping to arrange alternative transport
 - inside play provision for break and lunch
 - reward charts/personalised targets for children
 - signposting to other professionals who can help

Tackling poor attendance for children under statutory school age

- If a child's attendance is poor, in the first instance the class teacher will speak to the parent/carer and stress the importance of their child having regular attendance at this crucial stage of development. Support will be offered to improve attendance.
- If poor attendance persists, a member of SLT will contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons and to offer support.
- The CPO will be informed if there may be safeguarding concerns and will follow procedures, liaising with outside agencies and social care, as appropriate.
- If a child's attendance dips below 96% the parent / carer will be sent a letter to inform them that this has happened and explain the importance of excellent attendance for children, despite them being below school age.
- If there is no improvement, the EWO will send a letter to explain the possible consequences for poor attendance when a child becomes of legal school age.

Monitoring attendance

The admin team will:

- Monitor children's absence and their patterns of absence, together with any reasons for absence given (this is recorded on SIMS), and inform the CPO where there may be safeguarding concerns.
- Monitor, daily, the attendance of all children who are, or who have been, persistent absentees.
- Monitor, daily, the attendance of all children around whom there are existing safeguarding concerns and inform the CPO immediately should one of these children be absent.
- Phone the parent/carer if a child who has had an authorised absence fails to return to school on the day expected.
- Start child missing in education procedures by making reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers, friends and wider family, if after five days of absence a child has not been seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers.
- According to the school's legal duty, report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days to the Local Authority Single Point of Access. Education Welfare staff will visit the last known address and make all necessary checks.
- Inform the CPO and designated member of SLT if a child whose parent/carer routinely and promptly notifies school of any absence is absent without reason and parents/carers or emergency contacts cannot be contacted, so that a home visit can be considered.
- Monitor children whose attendance is below 96% and 90% and send letters to these parents/carers.

The designated member of SLT will:

- Monitor attendance weekly from the SIMS dashboard or FFT data.
- Meet with the EWO weekly to discuss attendance.
- Liaise with the CPO as necessary.
- Contact and remain in contact with parents/carers whose children's attendance dips below 96% and has not improved after the initial letter sent.
- Meet and remain in contact with parents/carers whose children's attendance is below 90%.
- Keep informal records of all discussions with parents/carers relating to attendance.
- Attend PAP meetings when required.
- Report to the governors (termly report) and the School Improvement Partner (SIP) (termly report).

- Communicate with class teachers about children in their class whose attendance is poor detailing discussions that have taken place, support that has been put in place, what they can do to support etc.
- Analyse data on attendance and absence broken down by group and cohort, identifying patterns of absence and planning effective ways of addressing this for groups of pupils, reporting to the Governing Body.
- Set attendance targets in line with benchmarked data.

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Meet with the designated member of SLT and the admin team and headteacher weekly.
- Contact and meet with parents/carers whose children's attendance is 96% or under and does not improve.
- Make home visits.
- Attend LAM meetings.
- Liaise with the CPO.

Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants will:

- Model excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all pupils are registered accurately.
- Alert the Attendance Officer or designated member of SLT if they notice patterns of poor attendance or punctuality, if a child is absent and they are not aware of the reason for absence or are concerned about a child's attendance.
- Alert the CPO if they have concerns relating to safeguarding.
- Encourage excellent attendance for children in their class by discussing the importance of this, praising improvement in attendance, giving rewards for improved attendance.
- Talk to parents/carers when children have been absent and/or at parents' evenings, to stress the importance of good attendance, and the relation between attendance and attainment.
- Ensure any pupil who has been absent for a significant period of time is provided with the support required to catch up on missed work.

The Headteacher will:

- Liaise with the CPO where absence/attendance raises safeguarding concerns.
- Report on attendance to the governors and the SIP along with the designated member of SLT.
- Decide whether individual cases of requested absence should be authorised or not, in line with school policy.

Parents/carers should:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring that their child attends school every day unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Promote the importance of attendance with their children.
- Phone or come into school and meet with a member of staff if they are having difficulty getting their child to school or if their child is reluctant or refusing to come into school.
- Make medical appointments, wherever possible, outside school times.
- Bring evidence of appointments that have been made during school time.
- Make any requests for absence in writing to the Headteacher.
- Inform the school if their child is ill on the first day of absence.
- Provide medical evidence if required.
- Inform the school of the reasons for any absence, on the first day of absence.
- Ensure we always have up-to-date contact numbers for at least two responsible adults.
- Be aware of the legal requirements and the school's policy on attendance and be able to access it from the school or on the school's website.

Promoting excellent punctuality

- Children (and their parents/carers) are expected to be on time each day so that children are in class and ready to start learning as soon as school begins.
- All staff will model excellent punctuality and praise children for good punctuality.
- If children arrive late (but before 9:20 a.m.), they are required to sign in at the school office and will be registered 'L'.
- If children arrive after 9:20 a.m. the session is recorded as an unauthorised absence on SIMS and will have an effect on a child's attendance level. The child will be registered 'U'.
- In the case that a child arrives late or is collected early due to a medical appointment they will be registered as 'M' - an authorised code. (Evidence of the appointment will be requested.)
- All reasons given for lateness are monitored, followed up by the designated member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where there are concerns and reported to the Child Protection Officer (CPO) where there may be safeguarding issues.
- Persistent poor punctuality or patterns of poor punctuality are reported to the CPO and EWO and parents may be requested to attend a meeting at school to discuss reasons for persistent lateness.
- We offer support for families to support excellent punctuality.

Punctuality at the end of the school day/session

We expect parents/carers to collect their child promptly at the end of the school day/session. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is

obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies.

We hope that through this policy, parents/carers, children and staff can work together to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality.

ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART

