

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our Vision

Kings Heath Primary School is a diverse and inclusive community of learners. We aspire for our children to be

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident individuals who are able to live a safe, healthy and fulfilling life
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society

We believe in education and learning that is stimulating, liberating and enriching and that helps develop minds that are alive to the diversity of human thought and achievement and to the richness of the natural world.

We aim to realise our vision in part through the fair and consistent operation of this policy.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Introduction.

At Kings Heath Primary School we believe that regular attendance and good punctuality are vital for a child to attain their full potential. We believe that irregular attendance and poor punctuality contribute to educational disadvantage.

We are committed to actively pursuing both our whole school attendance targets and improvements in attendance for individual pupils. This policy outlines the procedures school has put in place to achieve these goals and the expectations of parents, governors and outside agencies as partners in the educational process.

Roles and Responsibilities.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the Head teacher of the school meets her legal responsibilities in relation to all admissions, pupil attendance and registration regulations. The Governing Body will review the attendance policy on a regular basis and will support the actions taken by the school in relation to its implementation. It will also receive, question and challenge information on attendance presented as part of the Head Teacher's report to board meetings.

The Head teacher is responsible for setting attendance targets and ensuring that all staff employed at the school carry out their responsibilities for the day to day management of attendance matters. This includes

- Identifying resources and supporting initiatives to improve attendance
- Communicating information relating to attendance to Governors, staff, parents, children and the school community
- Considering requests for annual and extended leave
- Liaising with outside agencies as appropriate
- Making a decision as to when legal proceedings should be implemented

Class teachers are responsible for following all procedures relating to the recording, reporting and monitoring of pupil attendance as outlined in this policy.

Administrative staff are responsible for the day to day operation of the computer systems related to attendance and are the first point of contact for telephone messages related to pupil absence. A designated member of the administrative team will be responsible for monitoring levels of pupil attendance, sending computer generated letters to parents notifying them of concerns and meeting with the Headteacher on a regular basis to consider issues of referral and action to improve attendance.

The school will utilise the services of external organisations where appropriate to meet its attendance targets through working with families identified by the school as needing support and advising on current initiatives and legislation.

The school follows the Fast Track to Attendance programme, supported by the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) at Birmingham City Council. Following the procedures in this programme, where school initiatives and support to improve attendance have failed, the school will refer to ELIT for consideration of prosecution in court.

Punctuality.

The Governors and Staff of the school actively discourage late arrival. We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt not only their own learning but that of other pupils as well.

School opens for children in KS2 at 8.55am and for children in KS1 and FS at 9am. The register will be taken promptly upon entry to the classroom and any child not present at this point is considered late. Doors will remain open in KS2 until 9.05am and in KS1 and FS until 9.10am. Children arriving after registration but before the doors are closed will be marked as late on the registers. Children arriving after the doors are closed are marked as absent and an explanation will need to be given in accordance with the procedures below.

Electronic registers will be closed and sent to the office before 9.15am. A designated member of staff will record all children arriving in school after this time.

The member of the office staff with responsibility for attendance will regularly monitor the late book. The procedure for following up poor punctuality is outlined in the monitoring section of this policy below. Persistent late arrival after close of register will be addressed as unauthorised absence (see below).

Absences.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reasons for a child's absence on the first day of the absence. This can be done by a telephone call to the office or by writing a letter to the class teacher. Provision of a reason does not mean automatic authorisation of the absence. Only the head teacher can authorise absence, using the guidelines issued by the Local Education Authority.

Where a school does not receive a reason for absence then a call will be made to the parents by the school. This will happen on the first morning of absence. For all children classed as 'vulnerable' this call will be made immediately the office is aware the child is absent.

Authorised absences.

There are three main categories of authorised absence.

1. Where a pupil is too ill to attend school (see below)
2. If a day is set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong (Where the school is uncertain as to the status of a religious observance day, advice from the LA will be sought)
3. If suitable transport has not been provided for those entitled to such transport and the school is not within walking distance.

Other categories of absence which are specifically authorised by legislation are

1. A child taking part in a public performance approved and licensed by the LA.
2. A child taking part in an examination approved by the LA

The Head teacher may use his/her discretion to authorise absence on the grounds of

1. Unforeseen exceptional circumstances
2. Unavoidable medical or dental appointments
3. Fixed term exclusions levied by the school

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. An absence rate of below 90%, where the major absence factor is illness, will trigger monitoring procedures. Failure to engage with the school on this will lead to Fast Track procedures being followed, which include refusal to authorise further absence for illness without appropriate medical evidence. Parents' will be notified that this is the case in advance of any absence being unauthorised for this reason.

Application for Pupil Leave in Term Time.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended from September 2013 and make it clear that, by law, the Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence in term time unless it falls into one of the categories above, or exceptional circumstances apply.

The taking of holiday in term time on its own is not authorised. Definitions of 'holiday' include time spent in another location, day trips on school days with family / friends and time off to spend with visiting relatives.

Where exceptional circumstances apply, the parent must apply, through the completion of a standard form, at least two weeks in advance of the first day of proposed absence. (See appendix 1) If the request is denied and the child is removed from school regardless then the absence will be automatically unauthorised.

If circumstances make prior application impossible (acute emergencies) the parents must notify the school through the school answer machine or the enquiries email. A member of the office staff will complete the form and ask the parent to sign it upon return. In these instances the Head Teacher will make a retrospective decision about authorisation.

Failure to notify the school of intention to take leave will lead to the absence being automatically unauthorised (see below).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Unauthorised absences.

Any absence that is unexplained or that does not fall into one of the above categories is counted as unauthorised. This includes children arriving after close of registration.

Legal Sanctions

Under the Fast Track to Attendance programme, BCC has developed a legal process by which parents / carers may be issued with a penalty notice for taking a leave which is not authorised by the Head Teacher.

- Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling six half-term period
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Where the school intends to follow this process, advice will be sought from the LA before proceeding.

School will in no way benefit financially from any fine levied for this reason; monies are paid to and retained by the LA.

The school will follow LA guidelines around deregistration processes for pupils who are either

- Absent for more than 10 days without authorisation
- Granted leave in exceptional circumstances but fail to return to school on the agreed date.

Collection of children at the end of the school day.

The school has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of its children at all times. The following will be adhered to as a general rule but the school always reserves the right to deny access to a child if the staff member has concerns about the fitness of the collecting person to ensure the safety of the child. In no circumstances will children who are classed as vulnerable be allowed to leave the school premises unaccompanied.

Changes to normal arrangements.

The vast majority of our children are collected by parents. Parents are asked to complete a form at the start of their child's schooling stating the names and contact details of other adults they wish to authorise to collect their child and on which days. School will issue annual reminders to parents about the need to keep this list up to date; however, it is the responsibility of the parent to make sure it is so. If the adult who normally collects the child is unable to do so, then a message needs to be given to the school stating the change in arrangements. Teaching staff are instructed by the Head Teacher not to release children to a different adult, **even if the adult is known to the school**, unless express instructions have been received by the parents of the child concerned.

Requests for children to walk home alone.

Primary age children walking home alone at the end of the day is discouraged. However, the school recognises that parents of older children may wish them to do this as part of preparation for secondary education or as part of developing increased independence.

Children in year 6 will be allowed to leave the school grounds unaccompanied provided that the appropriate form is completed and handed in to the school (available on request from the school office). Parents will be reminded of this

in the last half term of Year 5, giving plenty of time for the form to be completed and returned to school for the start of year 6. Applications for year 6 children in year must give at least two weeks' notice, in order to allow the Head Teacher to consider the request. The completed form will be kept on file in the school office and a list given to class teachers. If such a request is made for children in year 5 the Head Teacher may request a meeting with the parent. Minutes of any such meeting will be kept with the child's records in school. The school will not release children in year 4 or below unless an agreed adult has arrived to collect them, even if the parent has requested this.

Children who are walking home alone should not stay in the playground after school but should make their way immediately to their destination.

Requests to walk home unaccompanied at the end of after school clubs will not be granted.

It is not school policy to allow children in any year group to leave the premises unaccompanied at lunchtimes. Requests made in exceptional circumstances and for limited periods of time will be considered by the Head Teacher on an individual basis.

Collection by older siblings

The school discourages any collection by children younger than 16. However, again it is recognised that this may be used by parents as part of developing independence skills.

Junior children will be allowed to leave the premises with older siblings under 16 provided they are named on the authorisation form or the parent has rung in to notify school on the day of the collection. The school will not allow collection of infant children by any person under the age of 16. The school reserves the right to refuse any request if there are concerns about the safety / robustness of the arrangements.

Requests for siblings in year 6 and year 5 to leave the premises unaccompanied will be handled in the same way as a request for children in year 5. The school will not give permission for Year 6 children to escort children in year 4 or below home.

Children walking to school unaccompanied.

The school discourages children from walking to school unaccompanied. However, it is recognised that parents may wish to allow this as a part of encouraging independence and preparation for Secondary Education.

The school's responsibility for the supervision of children in the playground begins at 8.45am. Children in year 6 will be allowed to be in the playground unaccompanied by their parents from this time onwards. Children in year 5 and below will not be allowed unaccompanied in the playground before school for any reason. Parents of children who persistently arrive early or who exhibit unacceptable behaviour will be contacted and their children will no longer be allowed in the playground unaccompanied.

In the interests of child safety, we ask that parents also complete a form to indicate to us that their child is making their own way to school. In the event of the child not turning up and no telephone call received from the parent to explain absence, the office will prioritise an absence telephone call.

Supporting Attendance

The school will ensure that all parents know the school policy on attendance. All new parents will receive this information as part of their induction pack.

The school will communicate promptly with parents in relation to all matters concerning attendance as outlined in this policy.

The school will promote good attendance and punctuality among the pupils through its reward system, the curriculum and special attendance weeks. In particular, the school will notice and reward cases of improved attendance and punctuality among individual pupils.

Monitoring and Review.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or in line with new legislation affecting attendance in primary schools.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as

		agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day