



# KENSINGTON AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Approved by:** Governing Body

**Date:** September 2022

**Last reviewed on:** September 2022

**Next review due by:** September 2024

## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy sets out the rationale, our aims and the strategies that will be used to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum attendance.

At Kensington Avenue Primary School all children have the right to an education. A good education helps to give children the best possible start in life. Regular attendance and punctuality is important for all children whatever their age and is essential for every child's attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

Children who do not attend school regularly miss out educationally and socially, making it harder to succeed and harder to make friends. With an increasing number of other services such as youth provision, counselling, out of school care and study support, being directly linked to school, children can also find themselves missing out on informal learning and recreational opportunities and available support as well. We know the impact of the recent pandemic had on children's access to learning and how this affected their relationships with others, highlighting the value of being in school.

We are aware that parents/carers are responsible for their child/ren's punctuality and attendance and we are committed to working in partnership with them, seeking to overcome any issues or problems that are causing unacceptable levels of absence. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to ensure that their child receives the education that they are entitled to by law. Our ethos is to work as a team and this is our approach to attendance.

Nationally, pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) and key stage 4 (KS4) have higher attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7% compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

The Department for Education guidance, which applies from September 2022, Working together to improve school attendance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1099677/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

The summary table of responsibilities for school attendance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073619/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf)

## **AIM**

Our aim is for all pupils to achieve 100% attendance. We are committed to working together and putting systems in place, which will result in the majority of pupils achieving that.

## **HOW WE Will ENCOURAGE GOOD ATTENDANCE**

At Kensington Avenue, all staff will provide teaching and learning environments that are welcoming, secure and stimulating, where pupils are respected and valued as individuals, encouraged to attend and therefore able to succeed. Additional support for more vulnerable groups will be provided.

We will raise awareness of the importance of attendance by:

- an attendance cup awarded weekly to the class with the highest attendance in Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and the Enhanced Learning Provision
- a punctuality cup awarded weekly to the class who are the most punctual in Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and the Enhanced Learning Provision
- a prize draw at the end of each term for all pupils who have had 100% attendance for that term
- a termly class reward to children with a 100% attendance e.g. in-school cinema show, extrasports session or extended play
- a termly attendance assembly with certificates for 100% attendance
- an end of year reward to children with 100% attendance.

We monitor the attendance and punctuality of all our pupils in school and, when necessary, communicate concerns to parents and arrange meetings to ascertain why children are not in regular attendance. We will offer support, encouragement and practical assistance to ensure that attendance/punctuality improves.

## **KEY STAFF**

Staff involved with monitoring attendance includes:

- the Head teacher,
- the Home School Liaison Officer,
- the SENCO
- the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- the Local Authority including the Children Missing from Education team (CME).

## **REGISTERS**

School attendance registers are legal documents. They are required by law to be completed twice a day at the commencement of each session. That means at the beginning of the morning and again at the start of the afternoon. Teachers must complete the register on the schools electronic register.

Attendance needs to be established once the children arrive in the classroom. You should allow the children time to quickly organise coats, bags, packed lunches and settle to the early morning activities. Teachers should settle the class and call the names on the register, in order that they appear on the register. There should be silence for this procedure.

Teachers should notify the school office if an explanation is received for the absence from the parent/carer. It is the whole school responsibility to seek an explanation for a child's absence and the teacher/attendance officer to ensure that a note is received explaining reason for absence on the first day back to school.

Weekly, an official register will be printed. The official register will highlight the number of unauthorised absences and the number of late marks for each child.

The school has a legal duty to publish the above information on the child's school report.

## **LATENESS**

Kensington Avenue Primary School makes it their policy to discourage late arrivals. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning, but also that of others.

The register is taken at 9.00am. Children arriving after 9.00 am and before 9.30am are marked late with an (L) code. The registers are closed at 9.30am.

Children arriving after the official close of the register, (after 9.30am) are marked with an (U) code for the morning session. The presence on-site is noted to meet fire regulations but their lateness is treated as an unauthorised absence for the am session.

In recognition of local circumstances, (bad weather, public transport problems) schools may keep registers open for a reasonable period. (Maximum 30 minutes). Registers are closed at 9.30am. For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line is taken on late arrivals. Where pupils miss registration altogether and fail to provide an adequate explanation, they will be marked as unauthorised. If a child is late 5 times in one half term period, a letter will be sent home advising parents of the schools concerns. If they still continue to be late for registration, a meeting may be required. If this still continues they will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Particular attention is paid to emerging patterns of late arrivals. If a pupil consistently arrives after the close of the register, (9.30am) a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.

Persistent lateness disadvantages children, as they are likely to miss important information and work. It is also disruptive to pupils already involved in the lesson. Registers are taken at the start of the morning/afternoon session.

## **REPORTING SICKNESS**

- Parents are expected to telephone the school on the first day of absence before 9.00am. If we have not received a note/message of the child's absence, the School Office will text and/or telephone the parent/carer to establish the reason for the child not being in school.
- After the third day of absence a phone call must be made or a note forwarded from the parent/carer to provide an update and the expected date of return.
- The school will make contact on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, should the child still be absent and no contact has been received from the parent/carer.
- If a child is absent for more than 5 consecutive days a doctor's certificate or a note from the GP is required.

## **REPORTING ABSENCE (OTHER THAN SICKNESS)**

Where children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, the legal requirements are that children should attend regularly and on time. Where such a child is absent, the pupil will be marked as unauthorised until a note explaining the reason for the absence is received at school.

Once this is received, with a valid explanation (not "ill" or "unwell") the code will be changed from unauthorised to authorised.

An authorised absence is one where the school has either given approval in advance or an explanation offered afterward, has been accepted as a satisfactory justification for the absence. All requests for leave of absences will be recorded to help in the management of attendance.

Reasons for absence that may be authorised are:-

- I        Illness
- M        Medical This may be a doctor, dentist, optician or hospital appointment and to be authorised we will ask to see evidence, which would be the appointment notification.
- E        Excluded by the school
- R        Religious Observance\*
- T        Traveller absence
- U        Late after register closed
- C        Other authorised absence at Head teacher's discretion – for example, death of a close family member, i.e. parent, sibling or grandparent.
- J        Interviews for secondary schools and entrance examinations
- D        Dual registration with a P.R.U or reading centre

*\* Please note that one day can be authorised for each religious observance, up to 2 days in any academic year. These days can be requested by completing the request form held at the office or the Google Form found on the website.*

All other absences are deemed unauthorised. The school is not obliged to accept any other explanation such as:-

- my birthday
- parent/carer is ill
- shopping (even if it is for school uniform)
- family Holidays
- caring for younger siblings
- waiting in for delivery/household item to be repaired
- car not starting
- nits/head lice
- oversleeping
- staying elsewhere overnight
- concerns re: bullying
- mum having a baby

These will not be accepted as valid reasons. In these instances the absence will be deemed unauthorised. The same applies if no explanation is given.

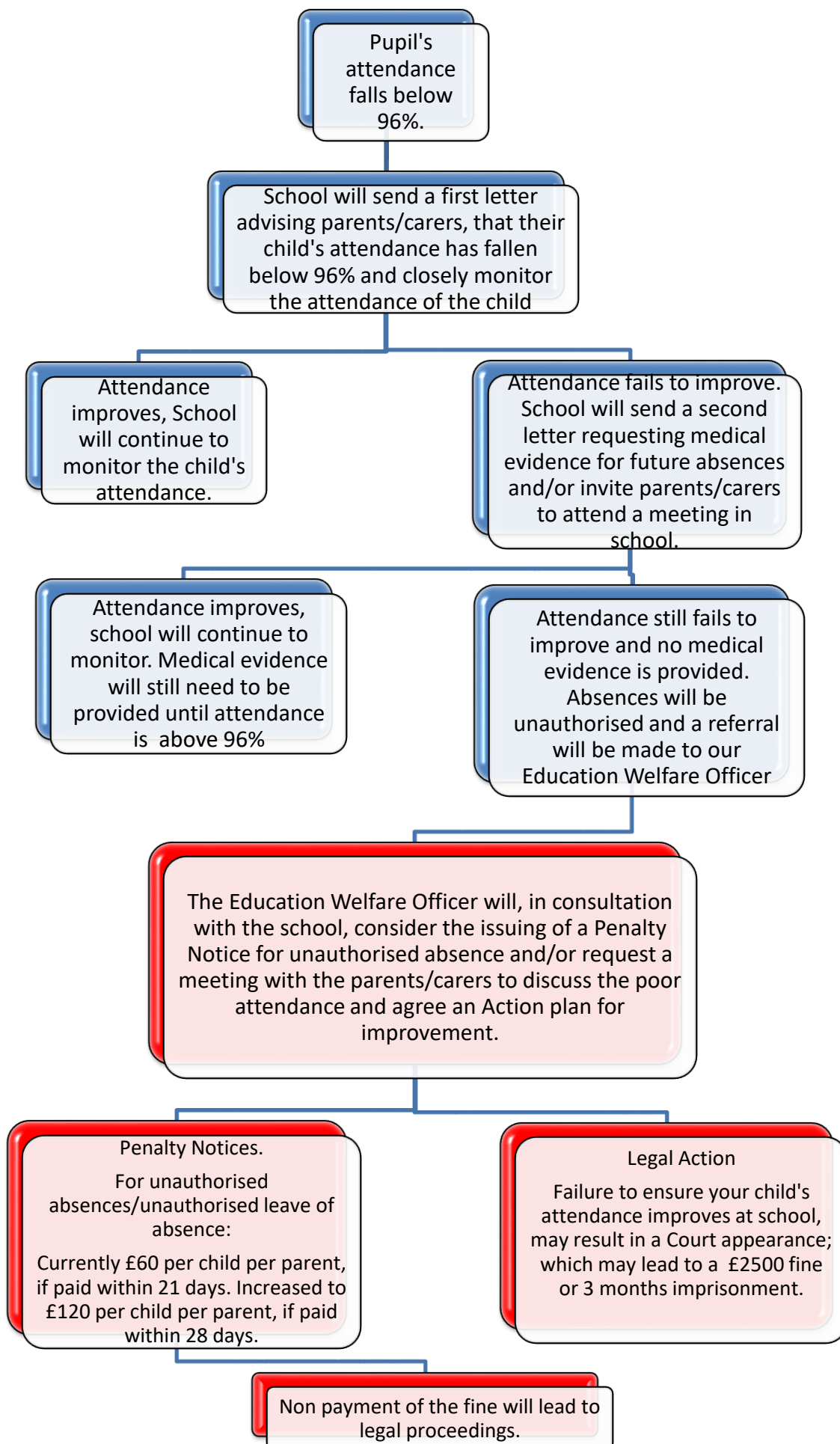
It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence. At Kensington Avenue Primary School the first day of absence should be covered by a telephone call with details of the nature of the illness, and when this can be predicted, the date the child is expected to be able to resume his/her studies. Otherwise, this should be explained by a letter on the child's return to school given to the class teacher or the school office.

A consistent approach to managing attendance throughout the school will be applied and all absences will be challenged in a positive and supportive manner.

The Home School Liaison Officer will make contact if advice or support is needed to improve attendance.

### **PROCEDURES AND ACTIONS THAT WILL BE TAKEN FOR ATTENDANCE LESS THAN 96%**

Where the attendance is below 96%, children will be monitored by the school's Home School Liaison Officer and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). This is because the attendance falls below the National Average for primary school attendance (2022/21) which is 96.4%. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, they are classed as being persistently absent.



A home visit may occur to check on a child's welfare if they have not been seen in school. If we are unable to contact the family, consideration will be given to whether the matter needs to be reported to the Local Authority, Social Services and/or the Police.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that parents meet their responsibilities. Attendance enforcement is usually carried out by the Local Authority Education Service which provides an important link between school and families.

### **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)**

Head teachers are required to tell the Local Authority CME department if a student fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised. When it comes to the attention of the Local Authority that a child is not receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at school, the Local Authority has a duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve notice or a school attendance order to the parent. The notice requires the parent to satisfy the Local Authority that the child is receiving a suitable education while the order requires the parent to register the child at a named school.

**Local Authorities also have powers under sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Education Act 1996 to bring legal action against parents in order to enforce attendance at school.**

### **The role of the parents/carers is to:**

- Show they value their child's right to education (Article 8 UN Convention Rights of the Child).
- Ensure that children go to school regularly, arrive on time and do not miss school for unacceptable reasons.
- Help children to understand the importance of going to school and make it clear that absences from school for no good reason will not be supported.
- Praise children for good or improved attendance.
- Ensure that the school is aware of any issues or problems that are affecting attendance and work with the school to resolve these
- Telephone the school or talk to a member of staff to explain any illness on the first day of absence and provide reasons for lateness.
- Make all appointments outside school time. In the event that this is not possible, parents are asked to provide confirmation of the appointment from the medical profession. A photocopy will be taken of the appointment card or letter for our records.
- Assist children at home in catching up on missed school work.

### **Pupil Leave of Absence from School.**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendments 2013 state that Head teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Kensington Avenue actively discourages parents from taking children on holiday during term time. Holidays in term time are not a right and will therefore, not be granted. It remains



at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise a Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances. Any Leave of Absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

**It is not the right of the parent to take children away during term time.** A request for special authorised absence should be made in writing on the form available from the school **at least two weeks before the holiday**. This will be carefully considered and in cases where the school cannot sanction the special absence, this will be recorded as unauthorised. No Headteacher will consider sanctioning absence during the half term of national tests or examinations. There is also a Google Form available to request absences for single day or short periods of leave, for example for religious observance or for a funeral.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school the absence must be marked as unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

If a Leave of Absence is granted and where the parents keep a child away for longer than agreed, then the extra time will also be marked as unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

A Penalty Notice is a fine imposed where a parent fails to ensure that their child is in education or has an unacceptable period of unauthorised absences. The penalty notice is £60 that must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Each parent is liable to pay the fine for each child.

#### **The school's role is to:-**

- Implement the Attendance Policy and review it annually;
- Monitor the attendance of pupils;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to deal with any problems that are affecting good attendance, including the provision of support by the Home School Liaison Officer;
- Use the support services in place to assist families in overcoming problems;
- Work together with parents, Education Welfare Officers and any other agencies.

Clear expectations of the responsibility for school attendance is outlined by the Department for Education which can be found by following the link provided above (page 2) and this guidance applies from September 2022.

Please ensure all reasons for absence are communicated to the school by telephone on the first morning of absence and written confirmation is forwarded when the child returns back to school.

If you have any questions or comments please contact the Home School Liaison Officer or EWO via the school office on 0208 764 2923