

	POLICY TITLE:	Attendance
Kingsmead Academy T/A Kingsmead School		
Committee/Person Responsible for Policy:		Deputy Headteacher : Well-Being & Diversity sub-committee
Date Approved by Governing Body:		May 2020
Date of Last Review:		Term 5 2019-20
Next Review Due:		Term 5 2020-21

1. Introduction

Our core values explicitly support the continued promotion and improvement of excellent attendance at school.

The whole school community actively recognises the importance of attendance at school in order for students to achieve their very best. We all share a commitment to do anything we can to support the **aspiration** of our students and supporting and promoting excellent attendance is a vital part of this.

Excellent attendance also reflects a **determination** to achieve and play a full part in the life of the school and the wider community. Students who have excellent attendance are able to reflect the core values of **care and respect** in their efforts to attend school at all times.

There is very good evidence linking excellent attendance and excellent educational progress and attainment in school. The governors and staff at Kingsmead School understand this link, but also strongly believe that excellent attendance fosters emotional resilience, self-confidence and a sense of community responsibility. Excellent attendance is also a practical life skill, and Kingsmead staff believe that simple skills like punctuality should be fostered at all times. Excellent attendance is a great 'habit' to learn. Staff, governors and parents will support students in learning this 'habit' to enable them to become successful young adults.

The whole school community will work together to ensure that excellent attendance is a key aim, and that excellent attendance is celebrated appropriately. We will regularly monitor the attendance of all students and when attendance is less than excellent, we will work together with students, parents, carers and any outside agencies to ensure supportive systems are put in place to enable attendance to improve.

We understand that there are sometimes, very understandable reasons why a student may not be able to attend school and we will always be sensitive in managing these circumstances.

In exceptional circumstances when attendance is poor, and shows no sign of improvement, it may be necessary to issue Warning Penalty Notices, Fixed Term Penalty Notices, or even consider a request to prosecute through section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act.

We are committed to the promotion of excellent attendance and the tackling of poor attendance by using the statutory powers of the Local Authority, including the issuing of these Penalty Notices and Prosecutions. However, this would only be a last resort and the school is fully committed to working with families and carers in a cooperative, non-adversarial way in order to improve the attendance of students.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusion.

This policy operates within the framework of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and the Race Relations Act 2000/Amendments 2003.

Whilst we are not legally obliged to set a target for annual attendance, we have agreed a target of 95% for 2019-20 with the Local Authority Support Services for Education (SSE) and will work actively with the allocated SSE Educational Safeguarding Officer (Attendance) to meet or exceed this target.

2. Legal Framework

The Education Acts of 1996 and 2006 state that parents/carers must ensure that students of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A student is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A student ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Students will by law have to stay in some kind of education or training until the age of 18.

Under the Education Act 2006, the Local Authority and the governors have a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for students of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

All relevant legislation that relates to Attendance can be found in:

- 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

3. Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are on roll but not present in school, their absence must be recorded as Unauthorised absence, Authorised Absence or Approved Educational Activity.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on each day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up with a **written note** on the student's return. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised on SIMS as follows:-

/ Present (AM)
\ Present (PM)
B Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C Other authorised circumstances
D Dual registration
E Excluded
G Family holiday (not agreed)
H Family holiday (agreed)
I Illness
J Interview
L Late (before registers closed)
M Medical/Dental appointments
N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised Abs
P Approved sporting activity
R Religious observance
S Study leave
T Traveller absence
U Late (after registers closed)
V Educational visit or trip
W Work Experience
Planned whole or partial school closure
Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X Non-compulsory school age absence
Z Pupil not on roll
- All should attend / No mark recorded

Illness

In most cases a telephone call followed up by a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their student is ill will be acceptable. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card or prescription etc.

Medical/dental Appointments: Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. A note will be needed for school records.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent/carer in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package or special need.

Fixed term exclusions from school are counted as authorised absence. The relevant Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

4. Leave of Absence

Term time holidays and extended leave are not allowed and will not be authorised as stated in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

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Parents/carers are advised to avoid taking students out of school during term time.

Kingsmead School will not authorise leave of absence for any student except in exceptional circumstances.

Parents/ carers wishing to request a leave of absence must complete a Leave of Absence Request Form (Available of the school Website) (Appendix 1) at least 6 weeks before that requested absence. Each request will be considered individually, but will only be granted if there is an exceptional circumstance (As determined by the Headteacher). Examples of exceptional circumstances might be:

- An absence that can only take place at an 'enforced' time (E.g Emergency service/military personnel)
- An absence that can only take place at a specific time because of enforced shift patterns.
- An exceptional family event that may be taking place.

When an exceptional circumstance like a family bereavement occurs, it is fully understood that notice for absence will not be able to be given in advance.

When deciding on whether to authorise a request for leave of absence the Headteacher will consider:

- Length and purpose of the proposed absence
- The student's general absence/attendance record
- Student's educational and social needs i.e. proximity to exams
- General welfare of the student
- Circumstances of the request
- Previous term time absences taken

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. All requests should make clear:-

- The expected date of return
- That parents/carers must contact school should any delays occur

Leave of Absence for Child Performers

The amendments made to regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and 2013 do not affect the section that allows the parent of a child performer to seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. Section 2 of regulation 7 still enables a Headteacher to grant leave of absence for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young persons Act 1963.

Legislation sets out that a local authority license must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the license specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the Headteacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise leave of absence.

5. Penalty Notices

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If a request for leave of absence is unauthorised the school **may** consider issuing a Fixed Term Penalty Notice.

This will currently only be considered in conjunction with the Educational Safeguarding Officer if a minimum of 10 sessions or 5 school days of unauthorised absence are taken during a term.

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) 2013 clearly state that a Penalty Notice can also be issued for:

- Overt truancy
- Parentally condoned absences
- Holidays taken in term time
- Persistent late arrival at school (After the register has closed at 9.00 a.m.)

If issued, parents/ carers will have 21 days to pay this £60 fine, after which it goes up to £120 per parent per child.

Failure to pay a fixed term penalty notice within 28 days may result in a criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrates Court of up to £1000.

Whilst the issuing of Fixed Term Penalty Notices will not be automatically actioned, the school governor's will annually review this possibility if they believe it would support improved attendance.

6. Religious Observance

Kingsmead School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to allow their students not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their student to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

7. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Absence

The aim for the attendance of GRT students, in common with all other students, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect GRT parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their student accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the student is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for GRT students is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their students are receiving suitable education when not at school.

8. Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8.50 am. The register (Taken on SIMS Lesson Monitor) will close at 8.59 am and students arriving after the close of register but before 9.30am will be recorded as late. The only exception is when school transport has arrived late, and school has been notified. Students arriving after 9.30am will be coded according to the reason for their absence. All students arriving in school after the register has closed must sign in at reception.

9. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- A permanent exclusion has been issued and procedures have been completed
- The death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- A student has been withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents a student returning to the school before the end of compulsory school-age
- The student has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

10. Children Missing from Education (CME)

If the school believes that a student is missing from education and cannot verify their whereabouts, we will follow procedures as outlined in Somerset County Council's 'Process for identifying, monitoring and tracking children not receiving a suitable education' 2013 – as well as following normal safeguarding procedures.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that excellent school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community. Therefore:

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers

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- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a committee of the governing body to lead on attendance matters (PDBW)
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets annually
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through regular reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers when discussing attendance issues
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually. Ensure that all staff are aware of the attendance policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues. Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named member of SLT to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time for training
- Return relevant school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department of Education
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through regular reporting to the Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and ensure that sufficient time, resources and training are provided to achieve this
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Tutors will:

- Complete a morning and afternoon register for the class using SIMS Lesson Monitor (plus any staff covering a registration session)

Heads of Year will:

- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families e.g. Education Safeguarding Officer, Parent Family Support Advisors, Adolescent Support Workers and The Police

Classroom staff will:

- Check the attendance of students in their lessons using SIMS Lesson Monitor and inform reception, The Attendance Officer or Student Support of the names of students who are absent without notification

The Attendance Officer will:

- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Notify by text parents/carers of any students absent for whom no message has been received or reason known daily and follow up if they receive no reply.
- Liaise with the Heads of Year every two weeks regarding any absence concerns.
- Send out letters to parents/carers by post whose students absence is a cause for concern or for whom their absence has not been authorised as a result of a call or message. This will usually be up to one week after the absence and is a 'stage one' letter followed up by a stage two letter if no reason for absence is forthcoming.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated including all text and phone calls home

The Educational Safeguarding Officer will:

- Work collaboratively with The Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, PFSA's and the nominated SLT Attendance Lead to devise strategies to combat poor attendance.
- Carry out legal responsibilities on behalf of the local authority

All staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation

Parents/Carers will:

- Take a positive interest in their student's work and educational progress
- Positively encourage full attendance at school
- Contact the school daily if their student is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school, or the PFSA, for help if their student is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their student's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their student's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of students receiving the same messages from both school and home

12. Using Attendance Data

Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

Attendance data will also be used as part of regular reporting to governors at sub-committee level and at Full Governors' meetings.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

13. Support Systems

Kingsmead School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties. Once aware, school staff will provide support as practicably appropriate. Parents/carers should make school aware of any further circumstances which may impact the student or young person e.g. bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

14. Celebrating Good Attendance

Kingsmead School will always endeavour to celebrate good or better attendance. Currently, we award attendance certificates on a termly basis. For those students with 100% attendance over a term, a gold certificate is awarded. For those students between 95% and 99% a silver certificate is awarded – and for those students who have made at least a 5% improvement in attendance over the term, a bronze certificate is awarded. These awards are given out in year/ upper & lower school assemblies. Attendance awards are also made annually at celebration assemblies and celebration evening.

15. Practicalities

The administrative routines outlined in Appendix 8 indicate a graduated response to encouraging excellent attendance and tackling poor attendance.

Monitoring/ Tracking Attendance Concerns

We are committed to monitoring attendance in a transparent and graduated way. This means that at any stage of the graduated response, a concern about a student's attendance could mean the concern moves them 'up' a stage – or improvement in attendance moves them 'down' a stage or hopefully 'off' the list of students discussed at attendance liaison meetings.

We would always want to ensure that any concerns about poor attendance are picked up early and discussed with parents and carers openly and supportively. Any necessary plans to manage, support or tackle poor attendance must be done with the full knowledge of parents and carers and students.

In order to do this as effectively as possible, we will ensure that:

Monitoring

The Kingsmead Attendance Officer regularly collates data regarding students whose attendance is falling under 93%.

Attendance liaison meetings

This data is used to populate a 'liaison sheet' that is sent to the Head of Year, who will then use it to discuss individual student attendance concerns at a bi-weekly attendance liaison meeting with the Attendance Officer.

These bi-weekly attendance liaison meetings are used to look for any 'patterns' of attendance that may cause concern. The Head of Year and Attendance Officer will work together to agree an appropriate supportive response. These might range from agreeing to monitor further without action, to contacting parents/ carers or initiating the involvement of other agencies (PFSA's etc).

The most likely response at this early stage would be for a parent/ carer to be contacted - and supportive discussions/ advice to take place.

Stage One Concern

If concerns about patterns of attendance continue, a general stage one concern letter (Appendix 2) or a medical concern letter (Appendix 3) might be triggered.

The attendance patterns of these students will then be monitored through attendance liaison meetings for up to six weeks.

Stage Two Concern

If there are continued concerns (For example up to 8 unauthorised absences in a 12 Week period), the concern will become an 'open case' with the Attendance Officer and the Head of Year will contact Parents/ carers personally, and through a stage two concern letter (See Appendix 4).

The school will continue to work positively with parents, carers and students to improve attendance at this stage, and will attempt to suggest strategies to improve attendance at all times.

Parental Contract Meetings

If concerns continue and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officer and the Head of Year will contact parents/ carers to invite them to a parental contract meeting (Appendix 5).

Parental contract meetings provide an opportunity for all parties to discuss the specific nature of the attendance concern face to face and put in any appropriate support/ plans if necessary. They also provide a mechanism to agree a short-term contract between the parents/ carers, the student and the school to support the action plan. Typically, this plan (Appendix 6) will involve setting challenging targets for attendance over period of time and initiating support as needed.

Parental contract meetings are intended to be positive and encouraging, as well as being an opportunity to outline the importance of improving attendance.

Penalty Warning Notices and Further Action

In the unlikely event of attendance failing to improve after the period of the Parental Contract Meeting and period of the plan (or if attendance regularly falls below 85% - or 'persistently absent'), the school may need to refer the case to the Education Safeguarding Officer who may issue a Penalty Warning Notice (Appendix 7). This notice outlines an expectation for the student to attend school every day over a fixed period – usually for 15 days.

The school will continue to work tirelessly to ensure attendance improves at this stage by involving any appropriate agency to support the student of the family (PFSA, CAMHS, etc).

However, if attendance fails to improve after this warning notice, the school, in liaison with the Education Safeguarding Officer, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, a pre-court warning letter or after that, consider prosecution – depending on the nature of the concern.

16. Legal Sanctions

In the unlikely event that a parent/carer continues to allow a student or young person to be withdrawn from school, prosecution may be the eventual outcome.

17. Prosecution

Where a package of support fails to bring about an improvement in attendance and if parents/carers are not taking appropriate or sufficient steps themselves to try and secure attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken.

The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents/carers realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning students to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their student if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.