



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Philosophy**

Kenton Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage one hundred per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be used whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify, and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at always returning the pupil to full attendance.

### **Objectives**

- to encourage and develop good habits of attendance and punctuality, thereby laying the foundations for a positive approach to both
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

### **Statutory Duty of Schools**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

## Kenton Primary School

### Principles

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. Pupils must attend school unless:

- They are genuinely too ill to do so,

Or

- Their absence fits any other of the school's discretionary reasons such as compassionate leave of absence, religious observance or where special educational requirements have been made.

We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy. We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues. We will promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence and will ensure regular evaluation of the attendance policy and procedures by Senior Managers and the School Governors. Attendance will be an important feature of the School Improvement Plan and Leadership Reports to Governors.

Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

### Procedures

Kenton Primary School positively promotes, acknowledges, and rewards good school attendance. There are termly certificates that reward 100% attendance over that term and end of year certificates and rewards for those children who have 100% attendance over the year. We also recognise pupils who are consistently on time and are not late for registration.

Through the school's newsletter and new parents' information pack we ensure that all parents are informed that absences need to be reported by telephone on the morning of the first day of absence.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will:

- Contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unavailable every effort will be made to make contact through emergency contact details.
- Contact will be made by letter if other contact fails.
- Send a second letter if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained absence. (*Head of School*)
- Refer to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) if no response is received after 5 days of absence, where no satisfactory explanation of absence has been received. (*Head of School*)
- Invite the parents into school after a maximum of 10 days absence unless other action is planned. This meeting will include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil and the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance. (*Head of School/Executive Headteacher*)

## Kenton Primary School

- Help the pupil's reintegration when a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, by being as supportive to the pupil as possible. (*All Staff*)
- To ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupil the importance of their education.

### Practice

- It is the responsibility of teachers to accurately complete the daily registers in line with the appropriate codes to determine and record the reason for each absence and lateness.
- Attendance is recorded by one of our school administrators on Arbor and regularly monitors pupils' attendance, following up absentees and unauthorised absences.
- Registers are completed and returned to the school office by 9.15am and 1.30pm. Pupils arriving after registration report to the office and are marked late.
- Our Educational Welfare Officer is available to discuss serious concerns about repeated or prolonged absences, lateness, or truancy. Appropriate action is then decided to support the child and family in improving attendance.
- Pupils with a 100% record of attendance are rewarded with termly certificates.
- Absence forms are available with instructions. They are to be completed and returned for authorisation by the Head of School. Details of the absence are then recorded on Arbor. A return slip is sent back to the parent/carers to inform them if their request has been authorised
- Annual attendance targets are set by the Governing Body, with guidance from the EWO, who meets with the Head of School where possible on an annual basis.
- Attendance is tracked termly and evaluated annually. Any necessary action is identified in the School Improvement Plan.
- Pupils' attendance is reported to parents/carers in their annual written report. Parents also receive a termly print out of their child's attendance.
- Attendance data is reported to the Trust Board every half term.

### Performance

Kenton Primary School will set realistic targets; these targets will be set in consultation with the Devon L.E.A and be based upon previous attendance and unauthorised absence data. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success, the school will consider whether:

- Attendance has improved.
- Punctuality has improved.

## Kenton Primary School

- Parental response to absence has improved.
- Reintegration plans have been successful.
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body, and the local community.
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedure operating within the school.

### Appendix 1

#### **Note to parents on avoidable absence in term time**

It is not an automatic right for families to take leave of absence in term time. Moreover, it is only in **exceptional** circumstances when leave of absence can be taken in term time. Leave of absence taken in term time can be disruptive to a child's education and can directly impact on their level of progress and attainment at school.

However, the school adopts a realistic and flexible approach, whilst always emphasising that absence in term time is exceptional rather than the norm.

At Kenton Primary School, if parents wish to request an absence, they will need to complete an Absence Request Form and attend a meeting with the Head of School to discuss the absence request. The request for leave must normally come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.

The Head of School is responsible for approving absence from school.

Following consultation with the Education Welfare Officer and other schools within the Dawlish Learning Partnership, we have adopted these common principles, for our school, in relation to considering absence requests.

- Absences will not be sanctioned in the first two weeks of a new term. (These times are important for strengthening friendships and introducing new learning within the curriculum)
- Absences will not be sanctioned during the school's assessment period in the month of May. (The data from this time is essential for us to plan learning objectives that meet individual needs)
- Absences will not be sanctioned if overall attendance stands at less than 96%.
- Absences will only be approved in exceptional circumstances during term time.

Details about holiday dates and non-pupil days are available from the school office or on the website.

If the Head of School does not sanction an absence, any absence by the pupil will be treated as unauthorised.

**Absence request forms are available from the school office.**

### Appendix 2

#### **Absence to include unauthorised holidays in term time**

## Kenton Primary School

- All absences relating to unauthorised holidays or other absence which is unauthorised for a period of 5 days or more will be subject to a potential penalty notice.
- If a penalty notice is not paid within a set time or a parent receives further legal action within a two-year period, then the parent may be subject to a fine of £1000 plus court costs.
- Schools have a legal responsibility to communicate regularly with Devon County Council and the Education Welfare Service to ensure all absences are monitored closely. This is something that has always been in place, but there is now clarity on the guidelines regarding school-based absences. In addition to this, schools must be very clear on where a child is if they have not attended school. It is therefore especially important that a parent rings in every day if their child is not going to be present. If we have not received a call, we currently are phoning on the first day of this absence to see where the child is. This good practice will continue. However, in light of a very serious case review nationally, we wish to insist on the following:
  - We have a minimum of three contacts for every child, to ensure that if we need to speak to someone urgently, we can.
  - If we have not heard from a child's parents or a contact person regarding the absence of a child in term time, we will visit the family home on the first day of absence.
  - If after the first day we have still not located the child and are unclear on where the child is, then we will contact the police. This is to ensure that we know the child is safe. These procedures have been put in place, as it is vital that we know the whereabouts of all children on the days that they should be attending school.

Head of School

Attendance Governor

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Policy reviewed Autumn 2022

Next review due Autumn 2023