Attendance policy
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Contents

1. Introduction:

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. King's Group fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Although parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our schools work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

2. Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our schools are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.

- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognized as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.

- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child´s education.

- Ensure that our policy applies to all pupils from Year 1 upwards however schools will make every effort to ensure that the children in the Early Years also develop good habits in punctuality and attendance.

- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues amongst all staff, parents and pupils.

- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.

- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.

- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.

- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.

- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.

- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

3. 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

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

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 in the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent with reason provided

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:15am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken, dependent on year group, between 1:00pm and will be kept open until 2.30pm.

Procedures:

Our schools will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents\carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.

All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents notify the school by calling the school's administrative staff as early as possible.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents notify the school in advance of medical\ dental appointments by calling the school's administrative staff as early as possible.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as late.

4.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

5.0 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as compassionate leave and travel to home country when parents have home leave.

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 at the head teacher's discretion in discussion with the CAO.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Study leave – study leave is not granted by for any pupils.

5.2 Sanctions

Schools can withhold school reports for parents who do not support this policy.

The decision on whether or not to issue a school report rests with the headteacher, following discussion with the CAO. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

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

5.3 Strategies for promoting attendance

Procedures:

Our schools will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes

- To maintain appropriate attendance data.

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.

- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.

- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents\carers have not communicated with the school.

- To inform parents\carers what constitutes authorized and unauthorised absence.

- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.

- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.

All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher.

6. Attendance monitoring

The school has an appointed attendance officer who is a member of the admin team.

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded on ISAMS and it is therefore important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Administrative staff check all of the registers from on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the CEO.

6.1 Addressing Attendance Concerns

The schools expect attendance of at least 97%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school careers. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance,

parents are always informed of our concerns. There will be opportunities for the parent to discuss reasons for the absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

7. Roles and responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole group on at least a termly basis. It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the SLT to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Taking the register and using the appropriate codes on ISAMS
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and\or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents\carers.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.

- Providing background information to support referrals.

- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.

- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.

- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.

- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

7.5 Administrative Staff

Staff in the school office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.

- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.

- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.

- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.

7.6 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.

- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.

- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.

- Making requests for authorized absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary.

- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that the problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Academic Officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

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

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
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