

Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School

Attendance Policy



Policy written by:

Date:

Reviewed & amended:

Statutory Policy

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**Reviewed September 2020
In light of COVID-19
Pandemic**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policies on:
Harrow Council Improving School Attendance Policy

Policy and Procedures Identifying and maintaining contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from Education (Harrow EWS)

Child Protection/Safeguarding



Attendance Policy

September 2020

Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School promotes regular school attendance and punctuality for every child. Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. This is even more important now during unprecedented times following five months of lockdown/school closure due to COVID-19. **(UNCRC Article 28: Every child has the right to an education)**. Furthermore, school attendance is also a component of safeguarding children **(Article 19: Every child has the right to be safe)**

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Reopen schools following lockdown and enforce regular school attendance of all pupils
- Reduce absence including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early; and
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

Legal Enforcement by Harrow Local Authority

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality Harrow Local Authority will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In addition, the Local Authority will impose Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents for unauthorised absence and may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 sets out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. Harrow Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices will be reviewed in light of the Supreme Court ruling in the *Isle of Wight v Mr Platt* case in May 2016. In April 2017 the supreme court finally ruled that a parents of a state school pupil **cannot** unless given permission under a school's attendance policies, take children out of school for a holiday in term time. The court's judgement applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Any authorised absence should be rare, significant, unavoidable and short. Cost of holidays and flights is not and will not be an acceptable reason for granting a leave of absence.

The guidance issued by the Local authority states that if a pupil misses 10 sessions (five days) as a result of unauthorised absence their parents are liable for a fixed penalty fine of £60 each parent per pupil. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the fine goes up to £120 per parent. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, it is regarded as a breach of section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and parents are liable for prosecution. The maximum sentence if found guilty, is a fine of £2,500, a three-month jail term and other penalties.

Any parent can ask for a 'leave of absence' to take their child on holiday, but the rules are strict.

The Local Authority Attendance procedure, enforced through the court attendance officer makes it clear to parents at Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School that the Head teacher cannot authorise leave unless it is genuinely exceptional leave. The children have 13 weeks of holidays when families can make arrangements for treatment and or visit family etc.

Parents/Carers need to be mindful that ingenious requests and evidence **will not be accepted** and nor will the common reason given – the costs of flight tickets etc. be considered as exceptional circumstances.

On admission into the school all parents are asked to sign an Attendance contract and abide by the expectations which are clearly stated in this document.

Harrow Council also conducts Pre Court Panel meetings in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.

The Harrow Attendance Guidance and Resources (pack) provides a clear outline of the process for escalating cases for legal action which is called Attendance Intervention Model (AIM).

Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School is committed to providing full and effective education for all pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from their education and regular school attendance is paramount. School attendance is monitored via the class register which is a legal and statutory document which all schools are obliged to maintain and monitor.

Without regular school attendance all our efforts to provide a high quality education come to nothing; for if a child is not present at school they cannot learn what we have prepared for them or reach their full potential. We therefore aim to have the maximum attendance rates possible for our pupils. There will, of course, be just and valid reasons why pupils cannot attend school on occasions, but we have systems in place to monitor and investigate absences across the school.

From September 2020 a pupil may not be able to attend school if they display symptoms associated with COVID-19 or live in a household where someone has symptoms or has tested positive. The child will be required to self-isolate in line with the most up to date advice from PHE. During this time remote learning will be provided and absence code X used indicating **'Not required to attend'**.

This policy outlines our practice and procedures for maintaining a high level of pupil attendance. It is in line with DfE legislation and Harrow Local Authority most updated guidelines.

1. **Aims.**

- To encourage maximum pupil attendance at school
- To identify and where possible, rectify problems which impede full attendance.

2. **Expectations.**

We expect that pupils will:-

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive and leave punctually
- Arrive suitably dressed and prepared for the day.

We expect that parents will:-

- Encourage their child to attend school regularly
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time and prepared for the day
- Inform school immediately (by letter, telephone or in person) if their child is absent from school
- Ensure pupils are kept off school where they display symptoms associated with COVID and follow PHE advice, look to get the child tested and keep the school informed
- Discuss with the headteacher any plans to keep their child away from school for reasons other than sickness, medical appointments or religious observance.

Pupils and Parents can expect that school will:-

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance
- Inform parents annually of their child's attendance record
- Contact parents if a child is absent without explanation
- Help with problems which could impede a child's attendance
- Provide, where possible, appropriate work at home for children who are prevented, by illness, the need to self-isolating due to COVID from attending school for longer than a week
- Be sympathetic towards the reintegration of a child who has a prolonged absence from school
- Contact the Home Tuition Service if a child is likely to have a prolonged absence due to illness
- Maintain a close liaison with the Education Welfare Officer.

3. **Early Intervention**

On Induction parents are presented with an attendance contract which they are required to sign. It sets out the duties of the school and those of the parent/carer. School staff will monitor and encourage good attendance as an integral part of their role. Staff will receive support from the Senior Management Team on matters of attendance and punctuality.

It is acknowledged that an early response to developing patterns of absence can be most effective.

The circumstances of the individual pupil or family should determine the nature of any communication regarding attendance. Staff should be particularly sensitive to issues of linguistic need in such matters, making use of translation or interpretation if necessary and where possible.

4. **Role of Staff**

The Headteacher will:

- Oversee the policy by checking attendance levels weekly guided by the Attendance officer responsible for inputting attendance data
- Report to governors
- Discuss attendance issues with staff, parents, School Nurse and the Education Welfare Officer.

The Class teacher will:

- Complete the electronic registers accurately within half an hour of the start of each session (am and pm).

Administrative staff will:

- Record reasons for absence by using correct codes
- Record and monitor a pupils' absence linked to COVID, monitoring timely return to school based on the circumstances and evidence where applicable
- On the first morning of absence follow up by telephoning re: any unexplained non-attendance
- Keep letters or records of telephone messages about absence for the remainder of the school year
- Follow up any unexplained non-attendance and regular lateness by sending the appropriate letter to parents
- Discuss with the Headteacher concerns about patterns of attendance.

5. **Unauthorised Absence**

A letter should be sent from the school requesting information regarding any absence for which there has been no prior written or telephone communication from parents.

This letter and brief details of any other communication made by the school should be noted in the register.

6. **Special Leave in term time**

Parents should not normally take pupils out of school in term time. Each request for special leave will be considered individually, taking account of:-

- the age of the child;
- the time of year proposed for the trip;
- the nature, purpose of the trip and parental wishes;
- the necessity of the absence;
- the duration of the absence and its impact on the pupil learning;
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil current and previous year/s ;
- the child's stage of education and progress.
- Evidence provided to substantiate the absence
- Evidence of arrangements to continue education abroad.

The School will invite parents in to school to discuss any proposed leave during term time.

Schools should only authorise absence of more than 10 school days in a school year under exceptional circumstances (and parents should not regard 10 days as the norm or an automatic right)

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in her absence) and may be withheld in certain circumstances normally related to the frequency of such requests.

When applying for Leave of Absence for special circumstances a return date should be recorded on the relevant form as well as the total number of school days to be missed.

If we agree to a special leave during term time it is very important that the child comes back to school promptly. Where a pupil fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date, and there is not good reason for this such as illness, we may remove the child's name from the school roll. This means that the child would no longer have a place at this school.

Where extended leave is requested for an extensive period of time due to exceptional family circumstances, the school will require the parent to make arrangements to admit their child in a school in the visiting country. Proof of admission details will be required prior to the leave being taken and once the child has been admitted, a faxed letter will be required from the school confirming admission. This will also enable the schools to communicate and exchange information related to curriculum coverage in the best interest of the pupil.

7. Lateness

Discouraging lateness is as important as encouraging good attendance, as lateness not only affects the learning of the latecomer but also disrupts the work of others.

Any pupil arriving late (after 9 a.m. when the school gates have been locked) is required to enter the school via the main entrance accompanied by the adult bringing them to school late. The adult is then required to sign the child into school in the late book. They will have to give a reason for the lateness. The Education Welfare Officer also monitors the late book as well as the registers to ascertain the reasons for persistent lateness. If no improvement is noticed following action by the school, he/she may request that the school make a referral to the Education Welfare Service for further action.

Staff should not keep the register open for a complete session.

Those pupils who arrive 30 minutes after the start of a session without supplying an adequate explanation will be regarded as having an unauthorised absence.

Regular lateness should be followed up in the same ways as developing patterns of absence.

In dealing with lateness, staff should take individual circumstances into account and avoid blaming the pupil for lateness that is beyond his/her control.

8. Rewards and Incentives

As good attendance is regarded as a priority, it must be given a high profile. This will be achieved by:

- Stressing the importance of good attendance in the School Prospectus, the School Profile and Newsletters.
- Reminding parents of our expectations regarding attendance at all Admission Meetings and Parents Evenings
- Reminding pupils and classes of excellent attendance so that there is a measure of pupil recognition for good attendance through;
 - Class weekly attendance certificates for the best percentage over a week
 - Class monthly best attendance certificates.
 - All pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the academic year are awarded a certificate and a Gold attendance medal.

9. Success Criteria

A minimum attendance of 97% at class and school levels.

Policy last reviewed: September 2020

Ratified by the Governing Body: 14th October 2020

Appendix 1

Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School



Attendance Policy Guidelines for completion of registers

1. Registration takes place twice a day at 8.50 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.
2. The register can be completed electronically by a teacher or a Learning Assistant.
3. When completing the register please use SIMS attendance module on the IWB.
4. Children should be marked present or absent, as the case may be, in the manner described in these register guidelines - / \ for present or N for any other reason.
5. Punctuality – children are marked late if they arrive after 9.00 and before 9.30 a.m. and should be marked with an L instead of N.
6. After 9.30 a.m. a reason for children's lateness/non-attendance will be marked in the register by the office staff.
7. Other codes are found on the drop down menu in SIMS.
8. The registers will be monitored on a daily basis by the Attendance Officer responsible for supporting the HT with attendance.
9. If for any reason the SIMS attendance module is not available, the register should be done manually on a class list which will be given to you by the office staff. This register should be kept in class until 9.05 a.m. & 1.15 p.m. then returned to the office.
10. At the present time in light of the COVID -19 pandemic where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine the absence will be coded as X (not required to attend)