



Attendance Policy

September 2025

Aspiring to be our best with kindness, respect and faith.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbour as yourself.” Luke 10:27



1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. Kings Education Trust believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Kings Education Trust values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Kings Education Trust 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 inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child 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.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, 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 pupil was:

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

From September 2024 there is a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions equivalent to 5 school days (each morning and afternoon counts as one session) within a rolling 10 school week period, after which a penalty notice must be considered by the school.

The new rules mean it is no longer possible to take a child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.

3. Categorising absence

3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school on the first day of absence by calling the school or emailing attendance@gkcs.school before 8:45am . Alternative arrangements will be agreed with Parents who may have trouble with written or spoken English.

If your child is absent, please do not message your child's class teacher via Class Dojo, as they will respond to you asking you to email attendance@gkcs.school

- If the absence is due to medical reasons, or if they are off for longer than two days, we may ask you to provide medical evidence such as a doctor's appointment card or a copy of the prescription.
- We are already aware of children who experience serious long-term medical conditions, and this is obviously taken into consideration, but it is important that the Pastoral Team are fully aware of all such circumstances.

3.2 Reminders about timescales for sickness

Any occurrence of sickness and diarrhoea means that children cannot return to school for 48 hours from the last occurrence. Please do not send your child to school before the 48 hours is up, as we will be contacting you to collect them.

3.3 Medical, Doctor's and dentist's appointments

Whilst we understand that it can be challenging to get an appointment with a GP or dentist, we would like to remind parents that all GP and dental appointments should be taken outside of school time. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day both before and after the appointment.

Absence to attend routine GP or dental appointments will be coded as M and evidence of the appointment will be required; without this the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This evidence could include a text message or letter with the details.

3.4 Other Authorised Circumstances:

- If a parent can evidence in writing that they will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays e.g. Service Families.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Written evidence from this professional would be required
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.

- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at an exceptional standard of achievement. Written evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. Close family will be Parents, Grand Parents or siblings of the child.
- In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Excluded (no alternative provision made): Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

4 Late Arrival at school

4.1 Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but having arrived late. The **register will close at 8:45am** and Pupils arriving after this will be recorded as absent, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

The register for the morning will be taken at 8:45am when learning begins. The register for the afternoon will be taken at 1pm for Reception 12:45pm for KS1 and 1:15pm for KS2.

If children arrive after 8:45am they must be escorted into school and come directly to the main office so we can ensure that have been recorded as being present in school. Parents will be required to sign the children in with a member of school staff providing details of why they are late.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at an exceptional medical appointment (Code M).

Children arriving after 8:45am will be recorded as **unauthorised** for the session, if the pupil has arrived late after the registers close without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry (Code U). Issues relating to traffic and working patterns will not be deemed acceptable reasons for lateness and will be unauthorised.

5. Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the school.

5.1 Examples of **unsatisfactory** explanations or reasons include:

- Traffic issues
- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- Couldn't get up
- Illness of Parent or siblings
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Attending tuition
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Medical or dental appointment where alternatives are available

All of the above reasons will be unauthorised.

5.2 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil who is expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact other persons on the emergency contact list for the child, if they are seriously concerned Social Care or the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

6. Leave of Absence and Extended Leave

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and are strongly advised not to do so. Parents should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

6.1 It is the policy of this school to not authorise absence for holidays during term time. While permission can be given in very exceptional circumstances, this is rare and can only be granted by the Headteacher. Any such request should be sent in writing a least 4 weeks ahead of the proposed holiday is taken and there should be no assumption that permission will be granted.

6.2 If a term time holiday is taken without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral made to the Local Authority Attendance Team. This may result in the issue of an Education Penalty Notice under section 444A Education Act 1996 in respect of each absent child, to each parent/carer. The Education Penalty Notice will be issued to both

Parents, irrespective of which Parent has chosen to taken the children away and which Parent the children reside with. Penalty notices are intended as an alternative to prosecution.

- The penalty fine will be £80 per child if paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid within that time, then it will rise to £160 per child. Schools are now required to liaise with siblings' schools so that the local authority can take a whole family approach.
- If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child/children within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 per child and there will be no lower rate option.
- If a holiday is taken for a third time in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them. Furthermore, you need to be aware of the strategies we as a school have adopted to improve attendance.

6.3 Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time must send a written request to the head teacher before arrangements are made. Please [email: attendance@gkcs.school](mailto:attendance@gkcs.school) with details as above. Documentary evidence of leave and return dates may be required in order to process your request. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made

6.4 All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, the letter should state:

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

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school will refer the matter to the County Attendance Team who may issue a Penalty Notice.

7. Religious Observance

Kings Education Trust 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 that this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. (Code R)

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child 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. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.

8. Traveller Absence

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

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

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

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a Traveller family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

8.1 Great Kingshill CE Combined School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at Great Kingshill CE Combined School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Great Kingshill CE Combined School can operate effectively as the child's base school only if we are engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families.

This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

8.2 Great Kingshill CE Combined School will authorise absence of Traveller children only if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school

- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as for any other pupil.

9. Deletions from the Register

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

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- When a parent informs the school in writing that the pupil is to be 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 pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence have elapsed and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil 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 pupil

Kings Education Trust will follow Buckinghamshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Kings Education Trust believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

10.1 The Trustees and Local Advisory Committee

They are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Safeguarding Local Advisory Committee Member and Safeguarding Trustees are responsible for the monitoring of pupil attendance.

10.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

10.3 Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Samantha Garner and can be contacted via: 01494 713159 or safeguarding@gkcs.school

10.4 Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer must be a DSL and is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see Attendance Monitoring)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, the headteacher,
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
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The attendance officer is Julie Marks, Family Support Worker and DSL, and can be contacted via: 01494 713159 or safeguarding@gkcs.school

10.5 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. This must be done every morning by 8:45 am and afternoon by 1:15pm.



Teachers will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families as requested

10.6 School administration staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls, emails and messages from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

10.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, all appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family

- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

10.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

11. Attendance monitoring

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. All pupils' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern e.g. disadvantaged and SEN.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Trustees.
- This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).
- Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Kings Education Trust will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Every **fortnight** the Attendance Officer will provide all a report to discuss with Senior Leader responsible for attendance and they will decide on actions for those children where attendance is causing concerns. Copies of these records must be kept to share with Trust monitoring officer. This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in this policy. Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Kings Education Trust will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

11.1 Analysing attendance

The Trust and school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly, at least half termly, to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

11.2 Using data to improve attendance

The Trust and school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Senior Leadership Teams and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

11.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

11.4 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and will send home hard copies of reports, where attendance is a concern every half term, to ensure Parents are informed.

11.5 Support Systems

Great Kingshill CE Combined School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Great Kingshill CE Combined School also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support

- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

12. Legal Sanctions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, Great Kingshill CE Combined School, Kings Education Trust, will notify the County Attendance Team of the irregular attendance.

The County Attendance Team or school, may invite parents to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

12.1 Parenting Contracts (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

12.2 Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- Intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupil has taken leave of absence i.e. for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine, per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/.carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

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
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
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
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
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