

Iford and Kingston CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Agreed and accepted by the Governing Board: September 02021

Date for renewal: September 2022

Section 1: Rationale/statement of intent

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is **unavoidable**.

We encourage all parents and carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality.

Section 2: Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular newsletters
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance in assemblies and publish in newsletters
- reward acknowledge good or improving attendance
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school
- Contact you if we are concerned about your child's attendance and offer support

Section 3: Legislation and guidance for parents and carers

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, information about the cause of each absence is always required, (preferably) in writing.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act).

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are: *rare, significant, or unavoidable*.

Therefore, the DfE only allows a Headteacher the discretion to authorise an absence if there are exceptional circumstances.

Section 4: School procedures

3.1 Registration

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. Registers are taken twice each day, **at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session**.

Pupils must arrive at school by the following times (varies according to year group) on each school day.

Year Group	Start time	Pick Up time
Reception/Y1/Y2	8.55	3.05
Year 3/Y4/Y5/Y6	8.45	3.15

The register for the first session will be taken by 8:50am (KS2) and 9:00am (KS1) and will be kept open until 8:55am (KS2) and 9:05am (KS1).

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00 pm.

3.2 Lateness and punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss this valuable time.

A child who arrives late after 8:55am (KS2) and 9:05am (KS1) but before the registers close at 9:30am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A child who arrives after the register has closed at 9:30am will be marked as absent for that whole session.

Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence. Lateness is monitored weekly and if a pattern of lateness is identified then parents will be contacted by the school attendance team and support put in place to ensure that it is addressed. If parents fail to engage or lateness does not improve, a more formal procedure will be put in place setting targets and **consequences** for the parents, which may result in a penalty fine being issued.

3.3 What to do if your child is absent

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required. As a school, we recognise that there are going to be a small number of occasions when children are unable to attend school, for example due to ill health.

If your child is absent you must:

1. contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence or you can call into school and speak to a member of the office staff.

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you by 9.30am we will telephone you on the first day of absence (and each subsequent day) – **this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety** as well as their regular school attendance.

2. Notify school by 9.30am **each day** that your child remains absent
3. Once your child has returned to school, please **send a note in** explaining the absence if you have not provided the school with a reason for absence during the absence period.

A **school** will authorise an **absence** if: the child is too ill to attend and the **school** accepts this as valid (**Schools** should authorise **absences due to illness** unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an **illness**). The school may ask parents to provide medical evidence such as a GP appointment card, a prescription or other form of appropriate evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

3.4 If we don't know why your child is absent:

We will attempt to contact you by telephone on the first day of absence if we haven't heard from you and continue to do so for everyday of the absence. We may also undertake a door knock after 3 days if we have had no contact from you and your child continues to remain absent from school.

3.5 Monitoring attendance and supporting children and families:

A member of our senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, a member of staff will meet with you to discuss the need and reasons for your child's absence. We will work with you to put in place a support plan or an additional needs plan which will be reviewed regularly with you.

As a school, we are also able to seek **external support from external agencies** such as **East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) to support in improving attendance for an individual child or a school.**

4. Medical and dental appointments

We ask that where possible, medical and routine dental appointment are arranged outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance written notice and a copy of the appointment card is required for authorising these absences.

5. How do I request an absence?

The school will provide you with a 'Withdrawal from Learning Application' which you should complete and return **at least 14 days before the proposed absence if possible.**

Parents are strongly advised not to make any bookings or incur holiday –related costs before approval for exceptional absence is granted. The school considers each application for term time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

6. What if my request is not authorised?

If you feel you have exceptional circumstances, have you ensured that the school are fully aware of these? Have you supplied all required information and any supporting documentation?

If you have any queries in relation to why your absence was unauthorised you should refer these to the Headteacher.

7. Legal Sanctions for unauthorised absence

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised. School may request for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued. East Sussex County Council is responsible for issuing fines to parents. However, the decision on whether to request a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

8. Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

East Sussex schools and East Sussex County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. **Legal measures will only be considered as a last resort** when there is unauthorised absence and all supportive strategies have been exhausted by the school:

The following legal measures may be **used on** parents and carers of pupils who are of compulsory school age and who are registered at a school:

- ❖ Prosecution for non-attendance
- ❖ Education Supervision Orders and Parenting Orders (if appropriate)
- ❖ School Attendance Orders
- ❖ Penalty Notices

9. Other types of absence

9.1 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the **nature and frequency** of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the **nature and frequency** of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

9.2 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of **able** sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events, and competitions. It is, however, **down to the headteacher's discretion** as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the **discretion of the headteacher** and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

10. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. As above, any problems with regular attendance are best **sorted out** between the school, the parents/carers and the child together.

If your child is reluctant or refusing to attend school, contact your child's teacher/Head of Year/SENCO/Pastoral Support as soon as possible to discuss your worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to reduce the barriers and resolve any problems early on.