



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Keston Primary School



PACE Academy Trust

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1. Introduction

Keston Primary School recognises that all pupils have the right to access full time education. A good education helps to give children the best possible start in life. Evidence suggests that children out of school are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse and more likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour. Regular attendance is essential to enable students to take part in all the opportunities available and to develop their full potential. We are committed to working in partnership with our parents/carers who are responsible for ensuring their children access education. Through the implementation of this policy, pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors all have a part to play in securing the following aims:

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Promoting good attendance
- Promoting and supporting punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Local Governing Body

The Governing Body is 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

4.2 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

4.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Ensuring that the learning environment, on offer to pupils, creates the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality
- Co-ordinating and monitoring the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the school.
- Raising the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through the assemblies and the reward systems that are put in place
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Facilitating 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 Mrs. Storey (Assistant Headteacher) and can be contacted via office@keston.croydon.sch.uk or on 01737 555103

4.4 The School Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 and the headteacher
- Liaising with the designated senior leader and assisting in following up poor attendance and punctuality, for example, organising attendance meetings with parents/carers
- Working with Education Welfare Officers (EWO) to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The School Attendance Officer is Mrs. Banda (Office Manager) and can be contacted via office@keston.croydon.sch.uk or on 01737 555103.

4.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, and submitting this information to the school office at the end of registration period in the morning and afternoon sessions

4.6 School Administration Staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system using the correct codes
- Refer parents to the class teacher or dedicated attendance lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Carry out first day calling/text messaging and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, send attendance letters
- Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the school computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality, for example, processing registers
- Submit attendance data for Children Looked After (CLA) as requested

4.7 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- To be fully supportive of the school with regard to attendance and punctuality
- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9 am on the day and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- To support the school and their child (ren) by not requesting authorised absence for holidays, during term time
- To contact the school immediately if they have concerns or if there are issues preventing full time attendance.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am for Juniors and 9am for Infants on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 for Juniors and 9am for Infants and will be kept open for 30 minutes after the session begins. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm for Infants and 1:15pm for Juniors.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

The parent should call the school office on 01737555103 and press option 1 for absence. A message must be clearly left detailing the child's name, class and what is wrong with them.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a child is late twice in one week without a valid reason, then a punctuality letter is sent to the parent. If punctuality continues to be an issue parents will be invited in to meet the attendance officer.

5.5 Following up unexplained absences

Where any pupil we expect 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 will send a text message and an email to try and contact the parents. If a safeguarding concern is highlighted then this may be escalated further.
- 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

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Each term an attendance matters letter detailing the child's attendance year to date is sent to parents.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of an immediate family relative, attendance at a funeral of a close relative, respite care of a looked-after child. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. **Holiday requests, including visits to see relatives abroad, are not considered 'exceptional'**. The school will also consider:

- The pupil's previous attendance history
- Attendance and punctuality in the current and previous academic year
- The nature of the request and whether any other requests have been made

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (*see section 5.3 for more detail*)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

A letter of approval (or a letter stating the request is not approved) will then be sent to the parent/guardian clearly stipulating that approval is only given in these **exceptional circumstances** and that **no** further requests will be considered.

6.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be requested by the school, issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

The school celebrates good attendance weekly in assemblies with the class with the best attendance receiving the attendance dog.

The weekly attendance by year groups is also displayed on the notice board in the office. Each term 100% attendance certificates are awarded to all children with 100% attendance year to date.

Punctuality Panda will also be awarded to the class with the lowest lateness across the week.

8. Attendance and punctuality monitoring

On a weekly basis all children with attendance below 95% are reviewed and letters sent home to parents where applicable. Persistent absences are also reviewed by the EWO at fortnightly meetings. The school uses FFT Aspire to support with the tracking of attendance. A monitoring folder is set up where all attendance is broken down with key groups such as SEN, EHCP and PPG children analysed for patterns and trends.

8.1 Monitoring attendance and punctuality

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Monitor punctuality data on a regular basis
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences and/or punctuality may be a cause for concern
- Where there is a cause for concern attendance will be monitored weekly

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 governing board. The school uses FFT Aspire to support with this.

8.2 Analysing attendance and punctuality

The school will:

- Analyse, with the support of FFT Aspire, attendance, absence and punctuality data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and/or punctuality, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance, absence and punctuality, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide attendance information to PACE Academy Trust on a termly basis and discuss outcomes with Trust leadership

8.3 Using data to improve attendance and punctuality

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families as part of parents' evenings.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 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 considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. This may include:
 - Use of social stories
 - Discussion with children
 - Providing emotional/well-being support for parents and children
 - Soft starts and morning check ins
 - Individual attendance support plans to meet children's needs
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- School works closely in partnership with the EWO to support families where persistent absence is highlighted. This can be in the form of meetings or home visits.

9. Deletions from the register /removals from the school role

Parents must ensure they inform the school of any change of address, contact details or family circumstances. Should a parent advise they are moving and will be removing their child (ren) from the school role, the school must attempt to obtain the parent's new address and if possible, the name of the new school the child will be attending. If this information is not supplied the school will complete a Missing from Education form and forward it to the LA.

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

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools is confirmed by communication with the new school
- Children withdrawn to be educated outside the school system (Educated otherwise)
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the child
- Left the school but not known where he or she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child

The school will report a child is Missing from Education to the LA, following 10 consecutive days of absence, when all checks have been exhausted. This will include: telephone calls to all known numbers on the school system, including relatives, discussion with class teacher, home visit by School/ EWO.

The school will email: childrenmissingfromeducation@croydon.gov.uk with the relevant information and await confirmation to remove.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Mrs Storey, Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Wellbeing 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
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

