Eastling Primary School Attendance Policy

Based on the DfE document "Working Together To Improve School Attendance"
Published February 2024 (applies from 19th August 2024)

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Statement of Intent

Eastling Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Eastling School.

Rewards

The school celebrates assembly each week with Attendance Ted being awarded to the class with the highest attendance. Class attendance is reported on the weekly newsletter.

The law on school attendance and the right to a full-time education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

At Eastling Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The attendance officer notifies the Headteacher of the children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Mrs G. Travers (Attendance Officer) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed termly of the child's attendance figure

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 90 - 95% attendance – the class teacher, form tutor or Mrs Travers to investigate and notify the Headteacher of concerns. Mrs C. Mansfield to contact parent if appropriate.
- Less than 90 % attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents if applicable.
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Lateness

At Eastling Primary School the register is taken at 8.50am am and 1.00 pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.15 am and 1.15 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. In some circumstances children are late due to issues with public transport and this will be taken into consideration.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed (Lateness code U) during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence (Lateness Code U) is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence (Lateness Code U) is recorded during the 15 days, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) or severe persistent unauthorised absence (50% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures before referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Pupils with long-term medical conditions or special educational needs

The school will work together with parents of pupils with long-term medical conditions or special educational needs. Schools must be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put in additional support where necessary to help them access full-time education. This will be done in partnership with parents.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Poor Attendance

(Please refer to: Kent County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence 2024)

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half-day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or a period of 50 days of schooling (10-week period) – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A penalty notice will be issued per parent, per child eg 3 siblings absent for term time leave, which would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued when an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 days a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child).

Notice to Improve

(Please refer to: Kent County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence 2024)

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage. Kent schools will issue a notice to improve for parentally-condoned absence and unauthorised absence. It will not be necessary to issue a notice to improve for term time holidays or leave of absence.

At the end of an unsatisfactory monitoring period, schools may request a penalty notice to be issued if this is considered the best course of action to improve attendance.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Holidays

(Please refer to: Kent County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence 2024)

Holidays **will not** be authorised. **For unauthorised family holidays (code "G")**

- A Penalty Notice will be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half-day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.

Exceptional circumstances:

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested 6 weeks in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to Kent County Council who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices

(Please refer to: Kent County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence 2024)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be; £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance within a 3 year period the amount will be; £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)
Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave and irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'

Using Data to Improve Attendance
The headteacher has regular attendance meetings to discuss individual pupils and their attendance. Attendance statistics are discussed and relevant attendance reports are shared with key staff to aid discussions with families. Best practice ideas are discussed and data is used to understand the impact of interventions.
Termly patterns of attendance are recorded and shared with senior leaders including

- Whole school and individual pupil basis
- Groups e.g. FSM, SEN, PP, CiC, GRT, EAL
- How we compare with national data.

Daily statistics are shared with the DfE via Wonde

Reduced Timetables (Working together to improve school attendance DfE guidance May 2023)
All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. Exceptional circumstances include:

- There's a specific need for a pupil- eg medical condition
- It's in the pupils best interests
- It's on a temporary basis
- A family bereavement
- A pupil joining the school has significant needs and it is being used for transition

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised. All applications for reduced timetables are made to KCC.

Home Visits
Through our safeguarding procedures, from the first day of absence, if we are in any way unsure about a child's absence, we will carry out a home visit.
If a child has been absent for 3 days or more, we reserve the right to carry out a home visit even if the parents have continued to be in communication with us.

Home visits will always be conducted by 2 members of staff.

Appendix 1 Attendance and Absence Codes

Appendix 2 Application for Leave of Absence

Appendix 3 PCN regarding absence from school - Guidance for parents

Appendix 4 Refusal Letter

Appendix 5 Notice to Improve

Appendix 6 KCC School Guidance for Parents

Appendix 1 – Attendance and Absence Codes

For more detail about absence and attendance codes from the DfE (see Chapter 8 of the Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk))

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Important information for parents – please read before completing this form

Working together to improve school attendance advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance'.

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise we will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

Our aim is for every pupil's attendance to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact Mrs Dale 01795 890252.

I have read the above information and wish to apply for leave of absence from school for:

Child's Full Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**Class:**

Parent/Carer Details (please list all parents)			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			

Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend

Child's Full Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**School:**

Details of the absence			
Date of First day of absence:		**Date of last day of absence:**	

Total Number of days absent:		**Expected date of return to school:**	
Please provide the reason for this request including supporting evidence:			

Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied, and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per parent, per child.

I have read and understood Kent County Council's information regarding penalty notices for absence from school and the action they may take.

Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	
Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	

To be completed by the school:			
Date request received by the school:		**Total number of days requested:**	
Child's Name:		**Application Authorised or Declined?**	
Reason for school's decision:			
In the case of a term time holiday please confirm which parent took the holiday:			
Headteacher:			
Signed:		**Date:**	

Appendix 3

Penalty Notices regarding absence from school - Guidance for parents

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. This guidance is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The important legal information – New from August 19th, 2024

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents take several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.
A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Kent, where a pupil's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and a fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).
The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance**.

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Appendix 4

Date:

Dear Parent Name
Leave of Absence Request
Re: CHILD NAME DOB XX/XX/XXXX

Thank you for your leave of absence request for [Pupil Name] to be absent from school from [Insert date – first day of expected absence] to [Insert date – last day of expected absence], a total of Enter Number school days.

You will already be aware from your leave of absence request, our school's attendance policy and the Government guidelines prevent headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Following due consideration, I am unable to agree to your request as the reason provided, ADD REASON provided by parent, is not considered exceptional.

I must warn you that if you do take your child out of school for this time the absences will not be authorised, and I will be referring the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of further action. Please find attached a further copy of the guidance for parents outlining key information for penalty notices regarding school absence.

We support the Government's stance on trying to reduce the amount of school missed and we hope that you will continue to support us by not planning a leave of absence during term time. If you would like to meet with me to discuss this matter and/or you believe there are exceptional circumstances which mean the absence cannot be taken during a school holiday period, please contact me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 5

School Attendance Notice to Improve for [INSERT CHILD'S NAME, DOB][CHILD NAME & DOB & SCHOOL]

At [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] we believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to gain the full benefit from their education.If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996. This notice is sent to you as the parent/carer of [CHILD'S NAME], (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at [INSERT SCHOOL NAME].

The school has offered support to you and your family to try and help improve [CHILD'S NAME]'s attendance, including:

1. **Telephone calls.** We contacted you every day your child was absent to understand why your child was absent and to offer support with any issues your child may be having.
2. **Letters**. We wrote to you on [INSERT DATES] letting you know about [CHILD'S NAME]'s attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.
3. **Attendance Support Meeting Invitations**. We invited you to meetings on [INSERT DATES] to discuss your child's unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. You were notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and you did not effectively engage with the support offered.
4. **Bespoke support for identified barriers to regular attendance.** *Please include a summary of support you have put in place/signposted to, to support the pupil and their family to overcome identified barriers to regular attendance.*

Unfortunately, despite the support that has been offered, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between [WARNING START DATE] and [WARNING END DATE], [CHILD'S NAME] has failed to attend regularly at [INSERT SCHOOL NAME] which has resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absence. Please see the attached registration certificate for details. We are very concerned that this amount of absence will have a harmful impact on [CHILDS NAME] learning and wider development.

You now have 30 school days (6 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. This means that between [ENTER DATE OF LETTER] and [DATE IN 6 WEEKS], your child must show significant improvements in attendance and have no unauthorised absences from school during this period. If there are any unauthorised absences during this time, we will need to refer this to the Local Authority and a penalty notice may be issued. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within

21 days. More information regarding the national framework for penalty notices and possible legal intervention can be found in our school attendance policy.

We still want to work with you to help [CHILD'S NAME] to attend school regularly. Please contact [INSERT STAFF MEMBER NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION] to make an appointment or arrange a phone call to discuss this notice and what further support is available.

Yours sincerely,

(Name)
(Job Title)
(School Name)

Appendix 6

Attendance

Persistent and severe absence

Any child with attendance of 90% or below (regardless of the reason for any absences) is considered to be a persistent absentee by the government. This equates to missing ½ a day of school every week. A child with attendance of 50% or below is considered a severe absentee.

Do you know what your child's attendance percentage is?

If your child is persistently or severely absent, the school might organise a meeting to find out what could be causing the absences and what is needed to help make things better. This may result in the creation of an attendance contract or referrals to services such as Early Help and Preventative Services, who may be able to provide your family with additional support.

Advice for schools

The school might also contact the Kent PRU and Attendance Service at Kent County Council for advice and in cases of severe or persistent absence.

All the information covered in this leaflet is available at:

www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance

There are 190 days in a school year, which leaves 175 days to spend on whatever you choose.



190 DAYS
100%
Very best chance of success



183 DAYS
96%
Off to a flying start



179 DAYS
94%
Less chance of success



175 DAYS
92%
Harder to make progress



MORE THAN 19 DAYS' ABSENCE LESS THAN 90%
Persistent absence, not good for your child



School Attendance: A Guide for Parents & Carers

Kent County Council works closely with schools and other services to promote the regular attendance of children at school.

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

Your responsibility

You have a legal duty to ensure your child receives a regular education at school or otherwise, which will help give them the best possible chance of success in life.

If your child is of compulsory school age and registered at a school, but absent without good reason, the school may choose not to authorise any of those days. This could result in the council taking action against you for each child absent, including:

- **A fine (penalty notice)***
- **Attendance Prosecution through the Magistrates' Courts which could lead to a fine of up to £1,000 or a parenting order being issued.**
- **An Education Supervision Order (ESO) through the Family Courts.**

*** Your child's school may apply for the council to issue a penalty notice to you if:**

- Your child goes on holiday without the headteacher's permission.
- Your child is absent or late without a suitable explanation, or none is provided.

You may receive a penalty of **£160** for each child's absence if paid within **28 days**, reduced to **£80** if paid within **21 days**.

If a second penalty is issued in a 3 year rolling period the fine is **£160** with no option to pay the reduced rate.

A third penalty cannot be issued in a rolling 3 year period and therefore you may face prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which could result in a maximum fine of **£1,000**.

www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance

Attendance matters

Too ill to attend school?

Children can attend school with minor ailments (toothache, headache, stomach ache, cold, sore throat). If you are unsure how long your child should be absent with an illness, ask your child's school, GP or pharmacist for advice.

Medical appointments

All routine appointments should be booked outside school hours. If your child is absent for medical reasons, your child's school may ask to see 'medical evidence' (e.g. copy of a prescription, medicine packaging with a label or appointment card). If you are unable to provide this, the school might not authorise the absence.

Absence during term time

Your child must not be absent from school:

- For day trips / birthdays / holidays
- If weather is bad or you are running late
- To care for other family members
- Due to the illness of a parent or sibling.

The school will only authorise an absence in very exceptional circumstances, such as in the event of a family emergency.

Reporting absences

It is a parent / carer's responsibility to notify school with the reason if their child will be absent.

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/

Every day counts

Punctuality

Arriving late to school is unsettling for your child and can be disruptive for their teacher and other children in the class. It is important your child arrives on time. If your child arrives late, this will be marked in the register. If your child arrives very late, this may be recorded as unauthorised absence for the whole morning. Be sure you know the times the school marks pupils as late.

Minutes late per day	Equals days-worth of teaching lost per year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days