



Diocese of Norwich
Education and
Academies Trust

Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

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Kessingland CE Primary Academy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kessingland CE Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
 - 1.1.1 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Kessingland CE Primary Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils / students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader
The Head teacher 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. The Head teacher will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils / students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. (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.

2.3 Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers / form tutors are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Leave of absence (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- (i) Registrations are taken at **8:50am** in the morning.
- (ii) If a child arrives between **8.55 am** and **9.05 am** he/she will be marked **late**
- (iii) If a child arrives after **9.05 am** he/she will be marked as absent.

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The final decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head teacher
- ii) Kessingland CE Primary Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Kessingland CE Primary Academy in consultation with the EWO will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- iv) Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a leave of absence for which the parents have sought permission in advance,

- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend (the school will require supportive medical documents from a parent if there is a pattern of frequent or irregular absence due to illness).
 - (c) where the pupil / student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand) the appointment card must be seen by the school.
 - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
 - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parent belongs;
 - (f) the absence meets the criteria for leave of absence granted by the Head teacher.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

no explanation has been given by the parent;

the school is not satisfied with the explanation;

the pupil / student is staying at home to mind the house;

the pupil / student is shopping during school hours;

the pupil / student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;

the pupil / student is absent from school on a leave of absence without prior permission;

the pupil / student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Staff training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

- 3.1 The Head teacher will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. (See para. above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.
- 3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.
- 3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfES within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Kessingland CE Primary Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.
- 4.2 First-day calling
Kessingland CE Primary Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil / student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils / students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a text message.
- 4.4 School Strategies to Tackle Absence
The Head teacher is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Kessingland CE Primary Academy intervene in non-attendance at an early stage.

Parents will be written to if their child's attendance falls below 95% explaining the need for medical evidence for all future absences. The letter will explain the importance of good attendance and explain the next steps should their attendance not improve. A meeting may be arranged to discuss further ways to help improve attendance.

Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's / student's absence and attendance falls below 90% the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil / student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit.

It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.5 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 6 school sessions in any academic year.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils / students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils / students who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3. (iii)) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil / student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil / student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other student with an emerging pattern of absence i.e. a penalty notice will be issued. (See para. 4.4). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.7 Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils / students arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils / students arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils / students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day must sign in/out with the school office).

5. **Term-time leave of absence**

Term-time leave of absence is intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

Kessingland CE Primary Academy will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, 6 weeks prior to the intended leave of absence.

Kessingland CE Primary Academy will consider authorising holidays only in the most exceptional of circumstances.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Kessingland CE Primary Academy will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

Kessingland CE Primary Academy will NOT authorise a leave of absence during periods of national tests i.e.: SATS examinations.

6. Extended leave of absence

Extended leave of absence will only be granted in the most exceptional of circumstances. Families should plan trips away in the school holidays.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Kessingland CE Primary Academy

Kessingland CE Primary Academy expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly and on time
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Kessingland CE Primary Academy on the first day of absence and every further day
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;

contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Kessingland CE Primary Academy will endeavor to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Reward Systems

Kessingland CE Primary Academy recognises the importance of celebrating good attendance and reinforcing positive attitudes. We celebrate this through our attendance race – classes are rewarded for good attendance. Individual certificates are awarded each term to pupils who achieve 100% attendance. Certificates and a small prize are presented to pupils who attain 100% attendance in an academic year.

9. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

Kessingland CE Primary Academy



Attendance

An Information Guide for Parents

Kessingland CE Primary Academy



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. **When does my child need to be in school?**

Your child needs to be lining up on the playground by **8.50**.

2. **What happens if my child is late?**

If your child is not in the classroom at **8:55am** when registration closes your child will be late.

If your child arrives between **8.55 am** and **9.05 am** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **9.05 am** he/she will be marked as **absent**.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and sign the Late Book. If a pupil is late on two or more occasions a meeting will be arranged with a member of staff to discuss reasons/ difficulties for lateness.

3. **What time are the gates closed and why?**

The gates are closed at 8:55am to ensure the safety of all pupils. **Please note that we do not tolerate any abusive language towards staff who are locking the gate.** If the gates are closed, your child will be late and is expected to report to the school office.

4. **Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence and every subsequent day their child is absent. If you know your child will be off for more than one day, please inform the office when you call. . If you do not phone us, we will phone you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

5. **What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

Illness-depending on attendance level - medical evidence needed i.e. prescription/GP appointment card
Emergency dental/medical appointment
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
Day of religious observance
Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate

6. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc. We will not authorize absences for attending a sibling's medical appointment.

7. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

8. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place in term time. These trips should take place in the school holidays.

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

Contact your child's class teacher or Headteacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Mrs Cooper our Pastoral Lead, is also available to discuss your concerns every day between 8:45am and 9:15am. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

10. What if my child is in reception or Nursery?

If your child is Reception or Nursery they are not compulsory school age until the age of 5. Even if your child is not compulsory school age, the expectation is that the same school procedures are followed to ensure the safeguarding of all children. Your child is expected to arrive on time and the office will need to be contacted if your child will be absent from school.

What is Good Attendance?

I am sure you can appreciate that good attendance is linked closely to achievement at school, which is again linked to enabling your child being able to access good opportunities throughout life.

97% and above:

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95% and above:

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90%:

The Government classes young people in this group as “Persistent Absentees” Young people in this group are missing four weeks of school per year; it will be very difficult for them to keep up with work and they are unlikely to do their best.

Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken.

Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.

95% attendance

When a child’s attendance reaches 95%, any absences will be unauthorised, unless medical evidence is provided, i.e. Doctor’s appointment card, dentist, hospital, etc. A letter will be given to inform parents. We may arrange a meeting to discuss further ways to help improve the attendance of your child.

90% attendance

When a child’s attendance reaches 90% and there are unauthorised absences, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made. A meeting will be arranged to discuss your child’s attendance.

If a child has 6 sessions of unauthorised absence, a penalty notice referral (fine) will be made. (1 day = 2 sessions)

(Unauthorised absences – parents failing to inform school of absence, holidays and arriving after the register has closed etc.