

Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Policy Type:	Academy Policy
Approved By:	Local Governing Body
Version number:	2
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Review Date:	September 2024
Person Responsible:	Headteacher

Summary of Changes

The model policy has been revised in July 2023 to reflect these changes to the local information and statutory guidance as outlined below.

Page Ref.	Section	Amendment	Date of Change
10	Appendix 1	Gate closes at 8:45am	July 23
8	Term-time leave of absence	Additional information about what happens if a second holiday is taken within the same academic year.	Sept 23

General Policy Roles and Accountabilities

The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) is accountable for all policies across its Academies. All policies, whether relating to an individual Academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our ethos and values as articulated in our prospectus. We are committed to the provision of high-quality education in the context of the Christian values of service, thankfulness and humility where individuals are valued, aspirations are high, hope is nurtured, and talents released.

A Scheme of Delegation for each Academy sets out the responsibilities of the Local Governing Body and Headteacher. The Headteacher of each Academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Academy Trust.

All employees of the Academy Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

1. Introduction

1.1 Kessingland CofE 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, 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 CofE 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 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 Champion

The Headteacher 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 Headteacher 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 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. They 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 are responsible for 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) Registration is taken at 8:50am in the morning.

- (ii) If a child arrives between **8:50 am** and **9:10 am** they will be marked **late**.
- (iii) If a child arrives after **9:10 am** they will be marked as an unauthorised **absence**.

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 Headteacher.

ii) Kessingland CofE 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 unauthorised 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 CofE 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 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 them 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 parent belongs;
- (f) the absence meets the criteria for leave of absence granted by the Headteacher.

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 is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a leave of absence without prior permission;
- the pupil 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 their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Staff training

The School Attendance Champion 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 Headteacher 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. Analysis includes a comparison of attendance within different cohort groups.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made within the stipulated time frame.

4. **Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Kessingland CofE Primary Academy and is regularly discussed in Collective Worship 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 CofE Primary Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage, pupils 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. It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school before the start of the school day when their child will be absent.

4.4 School Strategies to Tackle Absence

The Headteacher is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Kessingland CofE Primary Academy intervenes in non-attendance at an early stage.

Parents will be informed if their child's attendance falls below 95% at each half-term point (in the first half-term this will be 90%), explaining the need for medical evidence for all future absences. Parents will be told the importance of good attendance and explain the next steps should their attendance not improve.

Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence and attendance falls below 95%, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans will be put in place with the parents and pupil, 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. The school will inform parents when their child has 4 unauthorised absences.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils 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 who arrive after the register closes 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 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 who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils 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 who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office. Parents will be expected to sign the pupil in and give a reason for lateness.

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

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils 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 CofE 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 CofE 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 CofE Primary Academy will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. Six unauthorised sessions could result in a penalty notice.

Kessingland CofE Primary Academy will NOT authorise a leave of absence during periods of national tests i.e. SATs examinations.

If a child has a second holiday within the same academic year, then a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer. This could lead to legal proceedings.

6. Extended leave of absence

Extended leave of absence will only be granted in the most exceptional of circumstances. Families should plan trips away within 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 CofE Primary Academy.

Kessingland CofE 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 CofE 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 CofE Primary Academy will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Reward Systems

Kessingland CofE Primary Academy recognises the importance of celebrating good attendance and reinforcing positive attitudes. Children will work towards bronze, silver and gold awards by being in school on time for a full week (see appendix B).

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 CofE Primary Academy



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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

School starts at 8:45am and registration takes place at 8:50am.

2. What happens if my child is late?

If your child arrives after the entrance gate has closed at **8:45am** your child will miss registration and be marked as late.

If your child arrives between **8:50 am** and **9:10am** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **9:10 am** he/she will be marked as **absent**.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and sign their individual late card and share the reason why they are late. If a pupil is late on two or more occasions, a meeting may 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 8:45am for safeguarding reasons. 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 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 longer than one day, please inform the office when you call. 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. The school has an absence line and parents are expected to call before 9:00am. If a message is left, our attendance champion will return the call for further information if required.

5. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness- if attendance has fallen below 95%, medical evidence may be 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 also not authorise 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. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Mrs Cooper, our Pastoral Lead, and Mrs Hood, our Attendance Champion, are also available to discuss your concerns every day before and after school. 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.

9. My child is in Nursery or Reception and not yet compulsory school age.

Although your child does not become of a compulsory school age until the term after they are five, we want to encourage good attendance habits and the importance of coming to school every day. Your child will still receive an unauthorised absence if they are not in school without an authorised reason; however there will be no referrals to the EWO or external agencies. We still expect our Nursery parents to inform the school office when their child is not going to be in school.

School Attendance

EVERY DAY COUNTS!

At Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy we value the importance of being an attendance HERO!

100!

Here

Every day

Ready to learn

On time

100!

Every week that your child has 100% attendance they will move closer to receiving 'Cakes with Mr Crossland'.

When your child has achieved 12 weeks of 100% attendance, they will receive the **BRONZE** award. They will be given a certificate and an invite to 'Cakes with Mr Crossland'.

After 24 weeks, they will receive the **SILVER** award and will be awarded an attendance badge in addition to their second invite.

After 36 weeks they will receive the **GOLD** award. They will be awarded a special prize!