



Attendance Policy

Date Policy Formally Agreed By Governors:
Date Policy Becomes Effective: 2013
Review Date: 2017, 2022, 2024, 2025
Person Responsible for Implementation and Monitoring: Headteacher

1. Aims

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024) advises that ‘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 that their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances.’ It also states that ‘This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.’

At Keldmarsh Primary School, we aim to provide a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils and teachers work together to achieve high standards in all areas. In order to achieve this aim, we expect that our pupils will attend school regularly and punctually. To encourage this we endeavour to make the school a place to which the pupils want to attend, where they are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and addressed; a place where they can experience success. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build and support their children’s enthusiasm for attending school by developing strong relationships and working with the staff to support this matter.

In line with our ethos, vision and values, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance. Our aims for attendance at Keldmarsh Primary School are:

- All stakeholders understand the importance of school attendance
- Pupils attend school regularly and punctually with a minimum of 96% attendance expected
- Families feel supported with matters pertaining to attendance
- Attendance procedures are clear and shared with all stakeholders
- Patterns of absence are monitored regularly and acted upon early to support attendance

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board 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
- Monitoring and challenging attendance data
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing the attendance policy
- Developing attendance monitoring processes, ensuring these are understood and implemented by all stakeholders and monitoring their impact
- Monitoring attendance data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Reviewing absence request forms and approving or denying requests
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Administration Staff are responsible for:

- Supporting the Headteacher in developing and implementing attendance processes and monitoring their impact
- Overseeing attendance data and providing this to the Headteacher in line with the agreed processes.

The Local Authority are responsible for:

- Rigorously tracking local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Having a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools: Communication and advice / Targeting Support Meetings / Multi-disciplinary support for families / Legal intervention. Further information can be found here: [Expectations of Local Authority](#)

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Understand their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly
- Understand the importance of children attending school regularly
- Understand and follow the process for reporting their child's absence
- Understand and follow the process for applying for a leave of absence for their child
- Understand that family holidays are not classed as exceptional circumstances for absence
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child and update these promptly if changed.
- Ensure that, where possible, medical appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Inform the school by 3:15pm if their child is to be collected by anyone not normally scheduled to do so
- Collect their child promptly at 3:30pm at the end of the school day.

3. Recording attendance

We will place all pupils onto our electronic admission register and record their attendance in the attendance register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session, entering the appropriate national attendance and absence code for each pupil.

As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, we will ensure that the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4. Punctuality

The school doors are open from 8:45am and are locked promptly at 8:50am. Attendance is recorded on registers by the class teacher by 9:00am. Pupils arriving after the doors are locked must enter the school through the main office entrance. A pupil who arrives late before the register has closed, will be marked as late (L code). A pupil who arrives late after the register has closed must be signed into the building by their parent/carer using the Halo system. The pupil will be marked as absent (U code). The afternoon session begins at 1:00pm and the register is called immediately. Pupils arriving between 1:00pm and 1:15pm will be marked as late. Any pupil arriving after the close of register at 1:15pm will be marked as unauthorised absence. Punctuality is monitored by senior leaders, administration officers and are reported to the governing board.

5. Absence**Planned absence****Medical or dental appointment**

Pupils attending a medical or dental appointment will be marked as an authorised absence as long as their parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides proof of appointment in the

form of a text message or letter/card. The school encourages medical and dental appointments to be made out of school hours where possible, however, where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Where possible and practical, pupils are expected to return to school following an appointment.

Other planned absence

Parents/Carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence using the absence request form found here: [Absence from School Exceptional Circumstances Request Form](#) which can be found on the school website and is available from the school office. Term-time absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Each application for term-time absence is treated individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request and evidence may be required in order for absences to be authorised. Provision for Headteachers to authorise absence purely for the purpose of a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.

Parents must return the absence request form, in reasonable time prior to the planned absence, to the Headteacher or to the senior member of school staff who has delegated responsibility for this decision making. If an absence is required at short notice, the parent must make every effort to contact the Headteacher to discuss the planned absence. Where pupils are absent from school without a prior request being made to the Headteacher, the absence cannot be authorised. The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively.

Unplanned absence

Illness

In the case of an unplanned absence, the pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day by 8:50am or as soon as practically possible by phone (including by leaving a message on the answerphone absence line), via email or in person at the school office. Absence due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If this is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide reasonable medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, it will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Further valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- The local authority grants a licence for a pupil to take part in a regulated performance and the school has granted the leave of absence
- Attendance of an interview for admission to another educational establishment
- Religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to. If necessary, the school will seek guidance on absence from the parents' religious body
- The local authority has a duty set out to make access arrangements to enable pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so
- Transport normally provided by the school or local authority is not available
- There is widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
- Part of, or, the whole school site is closed expectedly or unexpectedly
- The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them
- An unavoidable cause preventing the pupil from attending the school i.e. something in the nature of an emergency that affects the pupil, not the parent.

6. Unexplained and unexpected absence

Where any pupil expected to attend school does not attend without reason, the school will follow steps 1 and 2 of the agreed attendance procedure (Appendix A).

7. Monitoring 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. Attendance of pupils reaching these thresholds is monitored in line with step 3 of the agreed attendance procedure (Appendix A).

8. Legal intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, the school and local authority will work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions are made on an individual case by case basis.

Penalty notices can be issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school and their absence constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offences. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This period can span different terms or school years. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday plus six sessions of late after the register closes). These can be consecutive sessions or not.

When the school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, each case will be treated individually before a judgement to issue a penalty notice. The first penalty notice issued to a parent will be charged at £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three year rolling period. Second penalty notices are charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. If the threshold is met within three years, alternative action, including prosecution, could be taken.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. In such instances this would be categorised as a Child Missing from Education.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.



Attendance Procedure

Step 1: Recording Attendance					
Administration staff to add any notes for absence received in advance of registers opening to SIMS.	Class Teachers to record attendance on SIMS, finalising by 9:00am.	Administration staff to check registers, ensuring all marks are in place by 9:15am.	Messages sent via School Comms App to parents of children absent without explanation from 9:15am.	Final marks added to register following explanations of absence.	Headteacher to be informed of any absence of identified children.

Step 2: Unexplained Absence			
When no explanation for absence is provided, administration staff to make phone call to first contact and, where appropriate and necessary, to further contacts from 9:30am			
Where absence is explained: Final marks added to register following explanations of absence.		Where absence remains unexplained: Administration staff to share this information with the Headteacher/DDSL at 10:00am and prepare a Welfare Letter for the Headteacher/DDSL to take on a home visit.	
		Where absence is explained: Final marks added to register following explanations of absence.	Where absence remains unexplained: The Headteacher/DDSL will take further action including contacting safeguarding/the police.

Step 3: Monitoring Attendance			
Once registers are closed at 1:30pm on a Friday, administration staff to provide Headteacher with a report showing children with less than 90% attendance and identified children for the week/cumulative weeks for the half-term period.	Headteacher to use the report to review and monitor absence, reasons for absence and trends.	On day one of week 4, following review of the end of week 3 report, Headteacher and administration staff to prepare letters/messages to be sent to parents regarding attendance, where necessary.	At the end of the final week of the half-term, the Headteacher will use the report to review and monitor absence, reasons for absence and trends. On day one of next term, the Headteacher and administration staff will prepare letters/messages to be sent to parents regarding attendance where necessary.
Half-termly meetings with the Headteacher, Administration staff and the Education Welfare Officer will be arranged to review the school's attendance monitoring and actions and to provide further support where necessary. All attendance matters will be logged on CPOMS. Attendance data will be shared with governors on a termly basis.			