



Kennett Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Principles

Kennett Primary School aims to work together with parent/carers and the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officers (AIOs) to ensure that all children registered at the school attend every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the whole school. At the same time, ensuring that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age. The recognised expected level of attendance at school is 100% unless pupils with chronic health issues or there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year (known as persistent absence) will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning. Parents can see their child's attendance and reasons for absences through the Arbor app.

Parent/Carers must:

- Ensure all children registered at Kennett Primary School attend regularly and punctually everyday unless prevented from doing so by illness or medical appointment.

- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents/carers will be asked to provide supporting evidence from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Report any changes to the contact details to the Office to ensure the school has the most up to date contact information.

Registration

Reception to Year 6

	Start of the day	Registrations Open	Registrations Close
Kennett Primary School	The main playground is supervised from: 8.40am	Registration is at: 8.45am and 1.15pm (Early Years & KS1) 8.55am and 1.15pm (KS2)	Registration closes at 9.15am (KS1) and 9.25am (KS2) and 1.45pm

- Once the school gates have been locked, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registration begins will be recorded as L, late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registration closes (see timing above) without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as U, unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

Lateness

Registration takes place as above after the start of the first activity of the day. This is also when the teacher informs the class of their daily timetable of learning and prepares the pupils for the day ahead. Pupils who arrive after the initial registration period and up to the close of registered will be marked as late. Any pupil who arrives after registered closes will be marked as an unauthorised late. Children who are persistently late to school will miss a significant amount of their education.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, parent/carers will initially have a conversation with the class teacher or member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, or will receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns in order to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, parent/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) for pupils who are of statutory school age.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/carers must contact school office via email or telephone on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 8.30am.

If any pupil is not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of the administration team will attempt to contact the parents/carers. Attempts to contact parents/carers will start once the morning registers have closed. These calls must be made by 9.30am to ensure the Safeguarding of pupils.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting evidence will be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, a letter that is headed from the medical professional or an appointment card. The duration of the absence will be informed by the length of the appointment. Where a child fails to return to school within a reasonable time following a medical appointment, it may result in attendance of the AM/PM session being marked as unauthorised.

Illness

Children who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea and/or sickness can return 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezing and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and are well enough to return to school.

COVID-19

If a pupil tests positive for COVID- 19 and this has been reported to school, the pupil should stay at home. If they feel well enough and do not have a high temperature, they can return to school after 3 days.

As a school, we are continuing to maintain the good practice of regular handwashing and pupils are encouraged to cough and sneeze into a tissue to help reduce the risk of passing on any infections.

School Responsibilities

While the Headteacher has overall responsibility for the monitoring of the attendance and lateness of every pupil, all members of school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness data. Where there are concerns regarding a child's attendance parents/carers will always be informed by letter and an appointment for a supportive conversation will be arranged.

If applicable, support strategies - with a monitoring period - will be put in place to help improve the child's attendance or reduce lateness. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be of concern, despite the implementation of supportive strategies, and there is no improvement towards the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance

Improvement Officer (AIO) for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a penalty notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Administration Team

The Administration team will aim to contact the parents/carers of any pupil who is absent from school, where a reason for absence has not been provided once the morning registers have closed.

Staff will ring the first priority contact number to establish a reason for the absence. If unable to make contact, they will call subsequent contacts until a reason for absence is known. Class Dojo may also be used to communicate with families to determine the reason for absence.

If the reason for absence is unknown at the close of registration, the school office will:

- Phone the contact numbers provided by the parent/carers to enquire about a pupil's absence
- Complete the registers in accordance to the guidelines relating to correct usage of codes
- Leave a message on voicemail and ClassDojo asking parents to contact the school regarding their child's absence
- Log the outcome of the phone call on Arbor – pupil data system
- Inform a member of SLT should there be a particular concern regarding an individual pupil's attendance or lateness

Headteacher

Lateness and attendance are monitored daily by the headteacher who will:

- Maintain an overview of the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with the parents/carers where identified patterns of lateness cause concern. An initial note of the conversation will be recorded on My Concern.
- Oversee the Administration Team's contact of parents by telephone, Class Dojo, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Where appropriate, raise concerns with parents/carers once attendance has fallen below the threshold set of 92%.
- Offer support or sign post to other areas of support within the community
- **Step One:** A letter or conversation advising parent/carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child(ren)'s attendance and/or lateness
- **Step Two:** Informal contact. This can be completed via telephone or through a verbal catch up at the start or end of the school day. The staff member engaging with the family will seek to ascertain barriers to the child accessing education, offering support and signposting.
- **Step Three:** Formal contact with parents/carers by letter to advise that the school is concerned about their child(ren)'s attendance and that this is being monitored. This letter will include a reminder to parents/carers about their legal responsibilities and give them opportunity to contact the school for support or to discuss reasons for low attendance.
- **Step Four:** A formal Parent Contract Meeting to be held in school, with parents/carers to discuss concerns and, working together, identify barriers and consider support which can be offered to improve attendance. Targets will be set to improve the attendance and/or lateness. Targets will be reviewed at the end of an agreed monitoring period.
- **Step Five:** Should the targets set at step three not be met, following the agreed monitoring period and despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue

of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) for children of statutory school age.

- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance and/or lateness.
- Monitor pupil attendance within specific and identified groups, including pupil premium.
- Monitor pupil absences for those with SEND and/or additional medical needs
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils 'Child Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents/carers who have elected to Home Educate their child(ren)
- Follow procedures when deleting a pupil from the school roll
- Engage with support from the AIO during allocated visits to school, who will also monitor the registers and follow up any identified concerns.
- Monitor absences due to illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Complete a Medical Needs Assessment on pupils with absences of 15 days during the school year
- Monitor and act upon requests for term time leave of absence and ensure parents/carers are informed of procedures in relation to authorised/unauthorised leave

Only the Headteacher, or a designated member of staff, may authorise any absence for a legitimate reason; not all absence supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

Definitions of Term Time Leave:

Our school expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness, subject to pattern of illness or a medical appointment where supporting evidence has been provided to cover the period of absence. However, there is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending where the appointment falls within the school day.
- Religious Observance - only days exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

Unauthorised leave

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parents/carers, such as shopping, hair appointments, visiting family or birthdays.
- Medical appointments, where supporting evidence of the appointment has not been provided when asked for.
- There has been no reason provided by the parents/carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Guidance for Parents – Term Time Leave

Parents/carers do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents/carers must complete a **Term Time Leave Request form** and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents/carers requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If the school suspect Term Time Leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed a Term Time Leave Request Form, we will write to all parent/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond or to provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional Circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis, such as up to two days absence from school to visit a dying relative, death of a family member, attendance at a funeral or any unavoidable one-off event. The following examples of requests for leave of absence do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance, will not be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice Fine/Prosecution for pupils of statutory school age:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term
- Trip of a life time
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence, if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance

If three or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a three-year period, prosecution in relation to Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued. Where a parent/carer takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

Non-Attendance at School

Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school is a criminal offence. If, following receipt of support from the school's headteacher and/or the Local Authority, your child's attendance does not improve, the Local Authority will consider one of two actions:

- **Penalty Notice.** Each parent receives a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If payment is not received within 28 days from the issue of the penalty notice, the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for the offence of 'irregular attendance'. Where this is the case, parents/carers may be subject to a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction.

- **Prosecution in the Magistrates' court.** Both parents/carers could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order, or a jail sentence of up to three months each. The court may also issue a Parenting Order.

The offence will apply to each child individually. Both parents/carers are liable for the offence. The Education Act considers each 'responsible adult' as a 'parent'. This includes a family friend or relative if the child lives with them and they provide day-to-day care.

Parents/carers who take unauthorised leave during term time or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence over any four-week period could be subject to the issue of a penalty notice or prosecution.

For further information about non-attendance and the law please follow this link: [Non-attendance at school and the law - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Attendance	Code
The session is a morning session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken	/
The session is an afternoon session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken	\
The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of register has ended	L

For further information about attendance regulations please follow this link: [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)