



# KINGS' SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Reviewed by:	RTR	<b>Jan 2019</b>
Approved by:	Pupil Support Committee	<b>Jan 2019</b>
Endorsed by:	FGB	<b>Jan 2019</b>
To be Reviewed	3 Yearly	<b>2021</b>

## **Section 1**

### **1. Rationale / Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at school is maximised and that unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

High levels of attendance at school significantly impact upon academic and developmental outcomes. The law relating to school attendance states in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 that the parent of every child of compulsory age shall cause him/her to receive fulltime Education suitable:

- a. to age ability and aptitude and
  - b. to any special educational needs he/she may have
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training

## **Section 2**

### **2. Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality**

- 2.1 The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our Termly Attendance Letter, School Comms, Headteacher's Newsletter, Website
- Report to parents on how their children are performing at school, what their attendance and punctuality rates are and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by presenting certificates for individual achievement
- Reward good or improving attendance through school competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Set targets for the school and for Houses for attendance and display these in the school
- Hold meetings with parents, pupils and staff to work together on raising attendance levels individually and across the school
- Communicate directly with families, where attendance is below 90%

## **2.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

A member of the Senior Leadership Team 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. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will work alongside the Attendance Manager to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers 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.**

## **2.3 Responsibilities of a Tutor**

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.

## **2.4 Responsibilities of a Head of Year**

- Liaise with the Attendance Manager on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils' at all appropriate opportunities
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence and to monitor any safeguarding issues

## **2.5 Responsibilities of Pupils**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive at school on time
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours

## 2.6 Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the Head of Year any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by:
  - Text to school 01962 600028
  - Email to school - pupilabsence@kings-winchester.hants.sch.uk
  - School Comms message
  - Phone message left – will need to be supported by a letter on return to school
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. Requests must be made in writing and sent to the Headteacher.
- Provide a note to explain absences when their child returns to school.

## Section 3

### 3.1. Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8.45am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm. Tutors should mark pupils as present only if they have physically seen them.

AM Registration

If a pupil arrives in Tutor between 8.50 and 9.00am the attendance will be registered as L (before register closes).

If a pupil registers after 9.15am they will be registered as U (late after register closes)

PM Registration

If a pupil arrives in Tutor after 1.05pm the attendance will be registered as L (before register closes).

### 3.2. Lateness/Punctuality

*DfE guidance suggests all official registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of school - but schools can choose to use a shorter period.*

For further advice and guidance refer to: Hampshire guidance 'Promoting Pupil Attendance Recording Absence' available at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The starts of school/lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If a child is late they could miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others, this can also be embarrassing to the pupil and lead to possible further absence.

- **The school day begins at 8.45am and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time. Morning registration is at 8.45 am and it closes at 8.50am.**
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and DfE guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to come to school to discuss the problem and offered support. If support is ineffective, not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice. This is in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 6 of this policy for further detail).

### **3.3 Absences**

#### **First Day Absence**

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence. Information received via Text/Email/School Comms is used to update the registers.

- If you have telephoned us we will still require a note with an explanation of the absence on the first day back.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; *this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance*
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Manager and/or Head of Year if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if the absence is unauthorised and attendance falls below 90%

### **Third Day Absence**

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a Child Missing in Education procedure as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family. A member of the Pastoral team and Attendance Manager will try to establish contact. If contact is unsuccessful the school will follow HCC guidance.

Hampshire County Guidance 'Children on roll but at risk of Missing in Education'  
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/Guidanceforchildrenatriskofmissingineducation-revisedSept2014.pdf>

### **Ten Days Absence**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure their contact details are up to date.

### **Continued or Ongoing Absence**

If your child misses 10% (equivalent to 3 weeks in a year) or more of schooling across the school year (or if attendance drops below 90% over a number of weeks) for whatever reason they are defined as a **persistent absentee**. Where this absence is authorised/unauthorised the school will invite parent/carers to discuss the issues and agree an action plan to support the parent/carer/child.

### **Request for Leave of Absence**

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that:

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether the absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to complete an application form in advance and before making any travel arrangements. Each request is considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher.

The '*Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances*' is available from the Headteacher's P.A. or can be found on the School's website.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised. If the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct then parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

For National Guidance refer to:

- School Attendance 2015 located at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

For County advice and guidance refer to:

- Hampshire County Council Guidance for schools and other education providers – promoting pupil attendance and recording absence.
- Guidance on approval of Extended leave of absence  
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/iba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>

## **Section 4**

### **4.1 Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised Absence: occurs when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence: occurs when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Refer to:

Hampshire County Council Guidance for schools and other education providers – promoting pupil attendance and recording absence.

## **4.2 Unexplained Absences**

When a pupil fails to attend without previous notification and/or explanation, the school will act as quickly as possible to ensure they are safe.

Such absence may become apparent at the beginning of the school day. When a pupil is absent in morning registration without previous notification, the school will make every effort to contact parents by phone, text or email as soon as possible (in normal circumstances, no later than 10.30am).

Unexplained absence may also become apparent during the school day. When a pupil unexpectedly fails to attend a lesson, the teacher will notify the school office. They will co-ordinate a check of possible explanations (Matron, Year offices etc) before contacting parents to alert them of possible truancy. The timings of this check and of contacting parents will depend on specific circumstances, with a balance to be struck between unjustified distress to parents and the risks to the pupil.

## **Section 5**

### **5.1 Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures**

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

### **5.2 Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness**

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will:  
use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

- a. **The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance**
- b. **The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.**

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

### **5.3 Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parents/carers request for leave of absence**

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- a. non approval of a parent's/carer's request for leave of absence or
- b. a holiday that has been taken without permission.

and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions (50 days), then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued.

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

The code of conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed

- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

**If a child has unauthorised absence which meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:**

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period**
- 1 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, or formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned the absence (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. **N.B** This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent.

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

## Section 6

## **6.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best addressed between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's Head of Year immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems and 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. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

## **6.2 What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it weekly.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch.

## **6.3 Leavers**

If your child is leaving school parents are asked to:

- Give the Head of Year comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new education provider and the start date when known. This should be submitted in writing

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

## **6.4 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families**

For further advice and guidance on Attendance & GRT and Showman see County Guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>

Further support & Guidance is available from Hampshire's EMTAS Service.

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

#### **6.5 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or TV work & modelling**

*For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit Hantsweb at*

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/child-employment.htm>

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C (an authorised absence).

#### **6.6. Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport**

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

#### **6.7 Study Leave**

We believe that pupils' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and pupils / pupils will be expected to attend school in the usual way. A bespoke timetable will be provided for the Year 11 pupils to ensure they get the most from this revision period for their GCSE examinations. Study leave will only be granted to Year 11 pupils during the time of the GCSE examination period. Should any pupils wish to attend school (or should their parents wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the legal requirements of:

- study leave should only be granted to Year 11 pupils and never to those in other year groups
- it should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, ie not before the beginning of that period

- it should always be granted sparingly taking account of an individual pupil's / ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study
- any pupil has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist he/she does so
- any sessions given to pupils as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence (coded S as it is not an 'approved educational activity') and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such

## 6.8 Pregnancy

Support will be directed by the key worker to keeping a pupil in school and wherever possible her return to full time education as soon as possible after the birth. A pupil who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.

## Section 7

### 7.1 Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

## Appendices

### **National guidance:**

***Guidance for schools on support and procedures for pursuing legal action for non-attendance.***

***Code of conduct – issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from schools (2015).***

***Effective practice document for school attendance procedures and admissions for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children 2014.***

***Guidance for children on school roll but absent and at risk of missing in education (2014).***

***Elective home education – advice to schools for Headteachers to apply (2014).***

***Guidelines for Hampshire schools, education centres and alternative providers in relation to length of school day – Statutory Regulation (2009).***

***Hampshire County Council Guidance for schools and other education providers – promoting pupil attendance and recording absence.***

## **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

### **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

### **Guidance documents on attendance.**

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>