

Kemsley Primary **Academy**



Attendance and Punctuality **Policy**

<i>Signed by Headteacher:</i>	<i>Miss I Homer</i>
<i>Signed by Chair of Governors</i>	<i>Mr S Edwards & Mrs H Duffy</i>
<i>Dated:</i>	<i>September 2023</i>
<i>Reviewed by:</i>	<i>September 2024</i>

REVISED FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

Statement of Intent

Kemsley Primary Academy is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Our target for each child at Kemsley Primary Academy is to achieve a minimum of 97% attendance throughout the academic year.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Alongside this, at Kemsley Primary Academy we want to support children to build habits and routines that will ensure successful characteristics and virtues as adults. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. These include Reggie Bear, Certificates, flash playtimes (additional play time) and an end of year school reward.

We recognise that our pupils are individuals and will work effectively with them and their parents/carers to enable them to achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems preventing good attendance are acted on promptly.

Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Kemsley Primary Academy.

Kemsley Primary Academy is committed to promoting race, disability and gender equality within all practices and procedures related to attendance and punctuality.

Student attendance and punctuality data may be shared with Parents/Carers, REAch2, Local Authority, Early Help, School Liaison Officer, Social Services, Police, Ofsted and the DfE.

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

Legal Framework

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

The Education Act 1996 states that:

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

a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and

b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- A person begins to be of compulsory school age

a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and

b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

- A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year

a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,

b) if they attain that age on that day, or

c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

Kemsley Primary Academy is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance and punctuality policy accordingly.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school. We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open and arrive on time. This is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

The school listens to parents and pupils, seeking to understand what is stopping individual pupils from attending regularly and they put the right support in place to help solve the problem but will not tolerate poor attendance.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent office@kemsley-academy.org

Or you can send a message via class dojo/ or contact the office 01795 428689. **This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and**

their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning.

If your child has been sick or had an upset stomach, **it is advised they remain at home for 24 hours since the last episode** Where sickness/diarrhoea is not due to a contagious infection ie a coughing bout/IBS and the child shows no sign of being unwell, then parents should use their discretion regarding their child's fitness to attend school.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill. Arriving late for school is a poor start to the day, potentially causing embarrassment to your child and disruption to the class.

School gates open at 8.30am and close at 8.45am.

The register is taken at 8.50am and 1pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). **The register will close at 8.55am and 1.05pm.**

Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

The school closes at 3:15pm.

School gates open at 3:10pm and close at 3:25pm.

All pupils are expected to be collected at this time, unless they are attending wrap around care or extra-curricular clubs.

The Role of the School Staff

At Kemsley Primary Academy there is a **whole school** responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

Miss I Homer – Headteacher

Mrs S Hornsby – Deputy Headteacher & SENCo

Mrs C Steadman – Attendance & Wellbeing

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late.

It is the responsibility of our Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call. If we are still unsuccessful, two members of staff may make a home visit to ascertain why your child is not in school.

- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed twice a year of child's attendance figure.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Illness

The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence and then each morning for the duration of the absence. If parents have not contacted school, they will receive a telephone call/class dojo message, asking them why the child is not in school. Unexplained absences will also be followed up by a letter and two members of staff may visit the family home. Parents will be reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality in newsletters, or more frequently if their child's attendance is causing concern. Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

Medical or dental appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of the school day as possible. The school office will require a copy of the appointment letter to authorise the absence.

Religious observance

We recognise that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will consider authorising absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should request the absence in the normal way by giving the school a written request in advance.

Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

Persistent unauthorised absence (20 sessions/10 days or more in the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

Local Authority Action may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher, parent/carer and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance service when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority Guidance will be followed, by complete a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- a) If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her
- b) If the child has been absent from school for 10 days (20 sessions) without valid evidence being provided.

The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file)

Unauthorised Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. Unauthorised absences are coded as "O". Please note that if correct procedures have not been followed to report absences or request a leave of absence, then they will automatically be classed as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. This will be the last resort if all other actions have been unsuccessful. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell

- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Term Time Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil registration regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Unauthorised absences due to holidays are coded as "G". Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school. The Headteacher may authorise absence in 'exceptional circumstances', but this must be requested in advance so that the circumstances and evidence can be considered appropriately. An application must be submitted via the Leave of Absence Request Form. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil registration) (England) regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. They can only agree to up to 10 school days' absence in any school year, in exceptional circumstances. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who could issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. The school will also take into account the attendance history of the child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Cases of exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a family member

- To attend the wedding or funeral of a family member Supporting evidence Please note that where a request is made and is authorised, it will only be on the understanding that the following evidence may be requested and is provided:
- Any required trip abroad – proof of flight details, including a proposed date of return. If flights have to be changed by an airline which directly affect the return date, then proof of this will also be required.
- Funeral – a copy of an order of service.
- Attendance at an event – proof of this, either a ticket or programme that includes a list of attendees.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Head can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Poor Attendance/Unauthorised Absences – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017

- A Penalty Notice can be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (or 5 whole school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive and 'U', 'O' and 'G' codes all count towards the absence totals.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day penalty period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent, per child.)

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

School Action for Poor Attendance

- **95 - 100% attendance** (if attendance is declining) - class teacher to investigate and notify the Attendance Officer of concerns or the Attendance Officer will monitor pupils 'at risk' of below 95% attendance. The Attendance Officer will contact parent if appropriate.

- **90 - 95% attendance** (if attendance is declining) - school intervention letters/meeting with parents – consider Penalty Notice or Early Help Notification.
- **Below 90%** (if attendance is declining) - If attendance has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, or the attendance is below 90% the school will invite parents in for a formal meeting with the Attendance & Wellbeing Lead.

If support is requested or attendance does not improve the school will make a referral to KCC's Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.

For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

The types of absences are also closely monitored as well as total figures. Support offered will be specific to the type of absence. For instance, high amounts of illness related absence will result in an offer of referral to the School Nurse Team. Refusal of assistance may result in further absences being unauthorised when supporting evidence is not provided.

Procedure for an absent child

A child's safeguarding risk will be assessed using any safeguarding information and/or thresholds known to us. For example, assessments will be based on concerns such as: is there a risk of forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, radicalisation, honour-based violence? If the judgement is that the child is at risk of harm, we will contact the police or social care immediately. In such cases, the school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child.

If a pupil is absent, a designated member of staff will endeavour to contact the parent or carer on the first day of absence and continue to make every effort to locate the pupil. If required two members of staff will complete a home visit.

The Academy will follow the procedure below:

Day 1 - Phone call

Response From Parent	Next Step From School
A staff member telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence.	If there is no answer, school send a message. Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours. The academy may complete a home visit or request a police 'safe and well' check if the vulnerability is considered high.
The parent/ carer answer the call, the child is safe with them.	Ask for reason for absence and record on your school's attendance management system.

The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is home safe.	<p>The school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child</p> <p>The academy may complete a home visit or request a police 'safe and well' check if the vulnerability is considered high.</p>
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned	<p>Advise the parent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing - Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child - Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centers near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment - Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing - School to make a referral to children's services

- *If the judgement on Day One is that there is reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm the school will contact Integrated Front Door immediately on: 03000 41 11 11.*
- *If the judgement on Day One is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm, the Academy continues to make enquiries and informs Kent's Children Missing Education Team on Day Ten that the child is missing education.*

Day 2 - Follow up phone call

A subsequent telephone call must be made either from the school landline or preferably a mobile phone. A home visit by two members of staff.

Day 3 – Write/email parents

The Academy will write or email to the parent in plain English, asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. The parents/carers will be given 3 working days to make contact and if the Academy is aware that English may not be the parent's first language, the letter will be, wherever possible, copied into a language that may be more accessible.

Day 5/6 - Home visit

The Academy will arrange a visit to the home address either by themselves or through requesting a police 'safe and well' check dependent on vulnerabilities identified through a risk assessment.

In the event that the Academy has completed all relevant checks to try and ascertain the whereabouts of a child who is not in school (or within 10 days, whichever is earlier) and the child has still not been seen and the parents/carers have not made contact with either, the

Academy will report the child as missing from education, following Kent's Missing in Education Policy 2016.

If the Academy become aware of any child who is not receiving an education we will contact:

Kent CME Team - call 03000 41 69 69; email cme@kent.gov.uk

Or refer online: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance/children-missing-education>

However, if the Academy is at all concerned about a child's safety i.e.

- a serious concern about the safety of a child
- a concern that a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed
- worry that a child is living in circumstances where they are treated badly and not cared for properly
- we will URGENTLY contact: Integrated Front Door immediately on: 03000 41 11 11, The Out of Hours Services can be contacted on 03000 41 91 91.