



**KINGSWAY COMMUNITY TRUST**

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## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**April 2023**

# School Attendance Policy

**Date: April 2023**

**Review date: Summer 2028**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 Kingsway Community Trust believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- 1.3 The Trust values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- 1.4 The Trust recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

## 2. Legal Framework

- 2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of Compulsory School Age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- 2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:
  - Present;
  - Absent;
  - Present at approved educational activity; or
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### 3. Categorising Absence

- 3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- 3.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.
- 3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:
- a) **Illness** - In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
  - b) **Medical/Dental Appointments** - Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card or mobile phone appointment to school.
  - c) **Other Authorised Circumstances** - This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to a very rare exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances can only be authorised by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School.
- Excluded (No alternative provision made)** - Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- 3.5 Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Executive Headteacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorized as unauthorised. Parents need to await the Executive Headteacher's response before making any arrangements for absence.
- 3.6 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing.
- 3.7 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

3.8 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school will always request the local authority issue a penalty notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates court.

### 3.9 Religious Observance

- a) The Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.
- b) It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.
- c) However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than two days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

### 3.10 Traveller Absence

- a) It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.
- b) To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.
- c) When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- d) Green End/Cringle Brook/Ladybarn (as appropriate) will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months.
- e) Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at the Trust school will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
- f) The schools can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:
  - Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
  - Inform the school regarding proposed return dates
- g) The respective school will authorise absence of Traveller children if it is satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.
- h) Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:
  - The child is on roll and attending another visited school
  - Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
  - The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

- i) Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

### 3.11 Late Arrivals

- a) Registration times are as follows:-
  - Ladybarn 9.00am, register closes at 9.30am
  - Green End 9.00am, register closes at 9.30am
  - Cringle Brook 8.50am, register closes at 9.20am
- b) Pupils arriving after these time will be marked as present but arriving late. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.
- c) On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the late desk to get a late card. This is to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
- d) The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.
- e) The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

### 3.12 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays

## 4 Deletions from the Register

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and appeal procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system

- Failure to return from an extended leave of absence, after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil. After 10 days, school will report to CME and will await notification from them before taking the child off the school roll
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

4.2 The Trust will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## 5 Leaving the School Premises during school hours

Children are not allowed to leave the school premises without an approved adult, (approved in writing or verbally by the parent/carer). There may be circumstances when parents/carers approve their child leaving school unaccompanied. In all cases, entries are made in the signing out book recording name, class, time, reason and person accompanying where applicable. This procedure is particularly important for emergency procedures in case of fire etc.

## 6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Trust believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, trustees, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Trust Board will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the School's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
  - Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Local Governing Body Meetings
  - Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
  - Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
  - Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
  - Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
  - Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

6.2 **The Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents

- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Local Governing Body.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

**6.3 Executive Headteacher/ Head of School / Deputy Headteacher/ Administrative staff will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

**6.4 Request that Parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance

- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term time, where this is unavoidable and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Executive Headteacher

## 7 Using Attendance Data

- 7.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
- 7.2 The first week of a new half term the Attendance Support Worker will provide all class teachers with attendance data for the previous half term for each pupil within their class. Every pupil will be colour coded as indicated below:

**GREEN – 95% above above**

**AMBER – below 95% but above 90%**

**RED – 90% and below**

Persistence absence (PA) is less than 90%

Severe absence (SA) is less than 50%

- 7.3 The Executive Headteacher and Heads of School are presented with a full set of data. The Head of School will meet with the Attendance half termly. In this meeting red and amber 2 children are discussed and actions put in place to improve attendance.
- 7.4 The overall totals in each category will be shared with the Local Governing Body Committee and overall absence data is shared at full governing body meetings.
- 7.5 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- 7.6 The Trust will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.
- 7.7 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 8 Support Systems

- 8.1 School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.



- 8.2 The Trust also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.
- 8.3 The school may implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:
- Discussion with parents and pupils
  - Attendance panels
  - Parenting contracts
  - Attendance report cards
  - Referrals to support agencies
  - Learning mentors
  - Pupil Voice Activities
  - Friendship groups
  - PSHE
  - Inclusion units
  - Family learning
  - Reward systems
  - Time limited part time time-tables
  - Additional learning support
  - Behaviour support
  - Reintegration support packages
  - Early morning call
  - Walking bus
  - Agreed time period
  - Picking up child in emergencies
- 8.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.
- 8.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Trust will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## **9 Legal Sanctions**

### **9.1 Prosecution**

- a) Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

- b) Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.
- c) A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.
- d) Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

#### 9.2 **Parenting Contracts** (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

- a) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.
- b) The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.
- c) The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.
- d) Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

#### 9.3 **Penalty Notices** (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

- a) Penalty Notices will be considered when:-
  - A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by school
  - A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence without reason provided and/or accepted as exceptional by the Executive Headteacher
- b) A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. This penalty amount is subject to change so parents are advised to check with the school office for the to find out the current penalty amount.
- c) Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- d) Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

## Appendix 1

### Escalation of Attendance Interventions

#### Promoting High Attendance for All

Parents are informed in writing of the importance of good school attendance and punctuality and their full support is requested at the beginning in the school prospectus and by letter in September. All parents are strongly encouraged to telephone school if their child is unable to attend on a given day.

- Parents will receive a letter home congratulating them on their child's good/excellent attendance.
- Pupils will be rewarded within the school's merit system in termly assemblies and weekly 100% rewards.
- If a child arrives new to school as long as they arrive arrive in the first half term of the given term they can get a badge 100% since starting.
- Pupils with this level of termly and annual attendance will receive a certificate of achievement / /badges.
- Children who achieve 99% or 100% attendance for the academic year are awarded a trophy in the summer attendance assembly. The 100% trophy will include those children who have only had authorised religious days and no others in the academic year
- They will also include pupils who have only missed for medical appointments due to conditions which necessitate they go as required including speech and language. Trophies can be awarded to children with 100% as long as they have completed a minimum of 2 terms in school,. Attendance Officer will monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

Half termly RAG rating exercise and discussions with Heads of School. In this meeting red and amber 2 children are discussed and actions put in place to improve attendance.

Attendance is also monitored on a daily basis by the Attendance Officer.

Telephone messages are accepted and recorded on the SIMS system.

If a child is absent with no contact the following actions are taken:

- 1) Call person 1 on the emergency contacts. If no response after set times go to action 2
- 2) Call person 2 on the emergency contacts. If no response after set times, go to action 3
- 3) Call person 3 on the emergency contacts. If no response/reason/ or contact go to action 4
- 4) Home visit by the end of the morning session by **two** members of staff.
- 5) If no one in, welfare call requested.

During Step 4, home visit, the lead member of staff will ascertain if the child is safe and make the next step decision. This may be:-

- a. The child is well enough to be in school:-
  - i. The parent is instructed to take the child to school straight away, or
  - ii. An offer is made to accompany the parent and child to school, or
  - iii. The staff members to take the child to school without the parent (if by car, as long as the correct car seat is available and car insurance is in place). The decision taken will be on the basis of potential risks being assessed.
- b. The child is unwell and parent is instructed to remain in contact with the school.

Children Missing from Education (CME) are always kept informed in cases of continued absence with no contact from families.

School can authorise absences in most cases when a reasonable reason for absence is given. If no explanation is given then the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Notes from parents are retained in the registers until absence reports are completed. Notes are kept on file in the school office for the remainder of the academic year.

Parents will receive a letter home requesting they call to arrange an attendance meeting with the Head of School. Home visit may be necessary.

## **Stage 1**

Informal meetings take place with the Attendance Support Worker offering strategies and support. This will then be monitored.

## **Stage 2**

If no improvement from Stage 1, support mechanisms may be put in place which may include regular catch ups with a member of school staff to encourage improvements, or early morning calls. Emergency pick ups can be offered for a limited time and the situation will be continued to be monitored.

## **Stage 3**

If attendance is not improving long term, parents will be invited into school for a meeting with the Attendance Support Worker, and, where appropriate, other professionals will be invited.

## **Stage 4**

If there is no improvement from Stage 4, the case will be discussed with the Head of School/Executive Headteacher and procedures set in motion for prosecution.

## **Punctuality**

The school actively discourages lateness, as it is disruptive to the pupil's learning.

The school registers open at 9.00am and close at 9.30am. Any child arriving after this time is regarded as absent even though they are in school. (This absence may be regarded as authorised or unauthorised). Registers are given out to classes at 8.50am and 1.00pm and returned to the office. In the mornings they should be returned to the office by 9.35am. In the afternoon, as soon as they are completed.

Children arriving late report to the office, if the class teacher has already returned the register. All late children are entered into the late book by the administrator who later transfers the details to the register. Children arriving between 9.00am and 9.30am receive a late mark in the register. Children arriving after 9.30am remain absent on the register but name, reason for lateness, date and time of arrival are recorded.

This information is useful when Absence returns forms are completed the following week. It is also vital information in case of a fire.

If lateness becomes a problem, the Class Teacher refers to the Attendance Support Worker who will write to the parents/carer and informs the Executive Headteacher. The Attendance Support Worker monitors lateness and keeps the Executive Headteacher informed of issues.

1. At the end of every half term data is checked and any child who has been late 4 or more times is sent letter 1 or verbally invited in for a meeting to discuss strategies that can be put into place to help. This letters details how many minutes they have missed. This is a general letter which says your child has been late (gives total minutes) and needs to improve.
2. Punctuality is checked regularly throughout the term checking for improvements. Those who have made improvements are sent a well done post card.
3. **If no improvement-** Families are contacted again and letter 2 is sent, this is a stronger letter, reminding them of strategies and informing them that if there is no improvement they will be asked to attend an attendance panel.
4. **If still no improvement-** after this then parents are invited in for a punctuality panel meeting with Head or Deputy- the school nurse may also be invited to this.

## In it to win it

Every half term each class has the chance to be in the “In it to win it draw” A random day is selected and the names of all of the children in the class who arrived on time that day are put into a draw. The winner gets to pick a treat out of the lucky bag.

## Intervention and Outcomes.

Records will be copied to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Headteacher. Each identified member of staff will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all contacts and meetings.

Attendance will be a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team meetings each half term where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management. The Executive Headteacher will report half termly to the Local Governing Body.

## Issue Status

Date	Issue	Date approved by Trustees	Review date
December 2021	Version 1 – December 21	13 December 2021	Autumn 2026
April 2023	Version 2 – April 23	17 July 2023	Summer 2028