



Kettlethulme St James' CE (VA) Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2015

Amendments to policy: August 2015

Policy effective from: 1st September 2015

Review date: Summer 2018

Strategic Leadership & Management Committee

Vision Statement

Attendance is a key factor in a child's education and we strive to achieve the highest possible rates. Continuity and progression are fundamental factors in our curriculum that support our ability to provide the highest possible standards of education. Failing to attend school regularly impedes progression and can have a major impact on young people's education, their future and their life chances. This policy is to outline our aims and strategies for the encouragement of good attendance. It was amended during the Spring and Summer Terms of 2015 through a process of consultation with teaching staff and the governing body. The implementation of the attendance policy is the responsibility of all staff. Ultimate responsibility for the attendance policy is that of the Headteacher.

Aims

We aim to:

- encourage good attendance patterns and punctuality
- monitor the attendance of our children carefully
- monitor holiday absences carefully
- encourage an active dialogue with parents
- maintain our attendance registers carefully in accordance with LA policy
- Provide information to support parents by reporting information about unauthorised absences to parents at least twice per year or as necessary.
- report authorised and unauthorised absence in the termly headteacher's report
- discourage late arrivals

Most people would think that 90% attendance sounds very good. 90% achieved in any other aspect of school, and life in general, would be outstanding. However, closer inspection shows that 90% attendance is actually not satisfactory. It is the same as one day absent per fortnight, or 20 days absent in a year or 1½ terms missed over 5 years. This adds up to an extremely large amount of work missed and means that continuity of learning is very difficult, if not impossible.

98% or above	-	excellent
95% - 97.9%	-	good
92% - 94.9%	-	satisfactory
90% - 91.9%	-	concerns

Below 90% - serious concerns

Evidence from across the country shows that students of all abilities under-perform greatly as their attendance drops towards 90%. Any attendance below that causes even greater learning difficulties.

Registration

Each teaching group has an attendance register prepared by the Administrative Officer. Children's names are listed alphabetically with date of birth. Registration takes place at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions. We will actively discourage late arrivals and will be alert to patterns which could be grounds for prosecution. Registration is between 8.50am and 9.00am. The Secretary of State recommends that closure of the register should be no longer than thirty minutes after the opening. Therefore a late mark will be registered between 9.00am and 9.20am. After 9.20am the register will be closed and an unauthorised absence will be registered. If a child is absent but the parents have not contacted the school, the administrator must contact the parent before 9.30am (where possible) to obtain information concerning the absence.

Lateness

Children who are late (arriving in class after 9.00am) require an adult to sign them into school. This process complies with our safeguarding policy. If a child is late on 5% or more occasions during a half-term a letter is sent to parents to ensure they are aware of the situation and offering support to remedy the situation. If a child is late on 5% or more occasions during the consecutive half-term a letter is sent to parents requesting they make an appointment with the headteacher to discuss the situation. A file is kept in the office for late arrivals.

Absence

We ask parents to notify the school if a child is absent. We will contact parents when a child's attendance begins to fall. Following an absence, an 'absence form' is completed by parents on the child's return into school to inform the school of the reason for the absence.

We will inform parents twice a year about their child's attendance rate:

- mid-year (February half-term) for children whose absence is 90% or under.
- at the end of the year with their formal school report (all children)

Absence During Termtime

Amendments were made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that **headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**.

Parents may receive a fixed penalty notice for an unauthorised absence in term time and receive a summons if unpaid within the time frame.



For exceptional circumstances, the school requests that parents:

- Apply in writing to the headteacher explaining the exceptional circumstance surrounding the request for the leave of absence.
- The headteacher will decide whether to approve leave of absence applications using the school's attendance policy and applicants will receive a written response from the headteacher letting them know if the application has been approved.
- If the absence goes ahead after the application has been declined it will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The school will decide if a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued. If this is the case the parent will receive a letter from the school advising that it has referred the matter to the Local Authority and that a Fixed Penalty notice may be issued. The school will inform the LA that the notice needs to be issued.
- A Fixed Penalty Notice will be sent to the parent, accompanied by an explanatory letter; the Notice gives the parent an opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted in the criminal courts.
- An absence will not be authorised, regardless of any circumstance, where attendance for a child is 92% or below.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
Paid after 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	Summons to appear before a Magistrates' Court on the grounds of failing to secure a child's regular attendance at school.	Summons to appear before a Magistrates' Court on the grounds of failing to secure a child's regular attendance at school.
Payments will not be accepted after 28 days. Payments cannot be made in installments. Conviction attracts a criminal record and a fine of up to £1,000.		

If a child's attendance/punctuality causes concern the school may request the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer. The EWO regularly checks register returns. Should the EWO wish to discuss attendance/absence with parents the school will support requests made to it. Parents who do not co-operate with the Educational Welfare Service can be fined up to £2,500 and/or receive 3 months' imprisonment.

Exceptional Circumstances

Each request for absence as a result of exceptional circumstances will be assessed on an individual basis. However, examples of exceptional circumstances may be:

- A day set aside for religious observation by the religious group to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Death or critical illness of close relative.
- The funeral of a close relative
- Marriage of close relative.
- Sibling or parental graduation or military passing out parade.
- Major birthday or celebration of close relative some distance away which requires travel.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We aim to develop an atmosphere of encouragement and support and it is our intention that all our children, regardless of ability, race, gender and disabilities, will be given equal access to opportunities to develop a positive attitude to good attendance at school.

Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

We assess our attendance on a regular basis and regularly reinforce our ethos on the school's website, in school newsletters and on public noticeboards within the school environment.

**