

Kingsleigh Primary School



Pupil Attendance Policy

Review Cycle: Annually

Last Reviewed: August 2026

Reviewed By: Headteacher

Next Review: Autumn 2027



Section 1 - Introduction

Our core values of **Respect, Belonging and Aspiration** are key to our success. They are promoted throughout all areas of school life and beyond. They enable everyone to be great! Being in school and on time will help our students be ready for learning:

School Gates open at 8.30am, register is taken 8.45am if your child arrives at school before after 8.45am but before 9:15am, they will be registered as 'late'. Lateness beyond 9.15am will be counted as 'Late after register closes' which will be unauthorised unless the school is offered an acceptable reason.

Punctuality and regular attendance are crucial to children's achievement at school. For most pupils, the best place to be during term time is in school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers, this is important for your child's learning, their wellbeing and wider development. Kingsleigh Primary School (KPS) will work in collaboration with parents and carers to ensure that all children benefit from regular attendance. Within school, staff communicate to pupils that their contribution to the school community is valued; furthermore, staff endeavor to make school an enjoyable place to be so that a positive attitude to school and learning is fostered: through this, we aim to ensure that children want to attend school regularly in the first place. Kingsleigh Primary School's attendance Target is a minimum of 96%, in line with the National Primary Target.

We understand that barriers to attendance can be complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school: therefore, we continue to offer a safe and supportive environment at school with strong and trusting relationships, with pupils and parents.

In law, parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school and are punctual. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which may lead to non-attendance.

KPS will endeavor to:

- Emphasise the positive reasons for full attendance
- Recognise and acknowledge good attendance, including infrequent attendance achieved in very difficult circumstances (e.g. chronic illness)
- Through careful and systematic monitoring of attendance, identify and act upon difficulties at the earliest stage, working closely with parents/carers
- Avoid acrimony and disappointment in connection with requests for absence through clarity and consistency in dealing with children and families

Section 2- Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> and School attendance parental responsibility measures. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

The guidance is also based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

-**Part 6 of the Education Act 1996** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

-**Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

-**The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208>

-The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>

-The Equality Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

It also refers to:

-School Census Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>

-Keeping Children Safe in Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

-Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools>

-Guidance for schools Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information>

Section 3 - Why is Regular Attendance So Vital?

There is a clear link between low attendance at school and low achievement. Government figures show that the attendance level at primary school has a clear impact on achievement, even at the end of secondary school:

- Of pupils who fall below 50% attendance, only 3% will achieve 5 9-4 grades at GCSE
- Of pupils in the 80%-90% range, only 35% will achieve 5 9-4 grades at GCSE
- Of pupils below 95%, only 73% will achieve 5 9-4 grades at GCSE

As a school we feel it is important to recognise attendance achievements and improvements. We do this on a class basis so that all are included and we can promote a sense of belonging and team work. We offer incentives like extra play time for the class/year group with the highest attendance per week and strive to make attendance something that all pupils are aware of.

Section 4 - Monitoring Attendance and Responding to Concerns

Mrs Charlie Richardson is the school named Senior Attendance Champion and has overall responsibility in maintaining and developing attendance procedures and progress. Being the Lead for Inclusion, she sets a clear vision for school, where Pupils are happy, safe, attending and attaining.

Mrs Anna Young is the school Attendance Lead and works closely with pupils and parents/guardians to offer support and guidance on all matters relating to Attendance.

The Attendance Lead will:

- Ensure that careful records of attendance are maintained
- Provide attendance information as requested by staff and for attendance monitoring meetings and audit
- Make day to day attendance checks on those pupils whose attendance has been identified as requiring regular monitoring and flag concerns quickly
- Ensure the school's arrangements for First Day Contact are robustly followed, always mindful of those children identified as 'vulnerable'
- Monitoring of attendance is a continual process, and actions may be triggered at any point where a concern is raised
- Formal internal monitoring will take place by the school bi-weekly through following the agreed actions within this policy, with the Attendance Lead and the Education social worker- Mrs Alyson Hammond-Forge

- Formal monitoring of attendance will include analysis of absence levels for individuals and specific vulnerable groups including disadvantaged children as a cohort compared to other pupils within the school. Such analysis will also consider other trends such as by year group

Role of the school Directors regarding attendance:

The governing board (acting as the academy trust board) has a core statutory responsibility under Department for Education (DfE) guidance to have regard to [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and ensure the school manages pupil attendance rigorously.

Core Governance Duties for Attendance

- **Promote a Culture of Attendance:** Embed high expectations for regular attendance across the academy's ethos, policies, and daily practices.
- **Hold Leaders to Account:** Ensure academy senior leaders fulfil their statutory duties, including maintaining accurate admission and attendance registers.
- **Review and Challenge Data:** Regularly analyse school-level attendance data, monitor persistent or severe absence trends, and help leaders target support toward specific cohorts (such as pupils with a social worker or medical conditions).
- **Safeguarding Links:** Treat attendance as a safeguarding matter, ensuring compliance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) regarding children missing education or unexplained continuous absences.
- **Staff Training:** Ensure all school staff receive adequate and updated training on school attendance procedures

All staff have a duty to informally monitor pupils' attendance and to report any concerns they may have. In this way, pupil attendance is being always monitored in the school. The school has key staff monitoring attendance.

There is a tiered system to respond to low and/or falling attendance levels. All pupils' attendance is tracked each fortnight. For any pupil who has attendance below 96% a 'Letter 1' is sent. This letter is informative, notifying the parent/carer of their child's attendance level and explaining how the school will continue to monitor it. In some cases, where the reason for a pupil's attendance falling below 96% is very specific, the school may decide that Letter 1 is not required or appropriate. In such circumstances, the pupils' attendance will be closely monitored and any further reduction in attendance may prompt this initial letter.

Once Letter 1 is issued, attendance will continue to be tracked and if there is no improvement or a further decline then 'Letter 2' will be sent. The purpose of this letter is to clearly identify that the child's attendance level is a significant cause for concern. The letter may not be sent where there are exceptional circumstances, such as a known medical condition.

Within Letter 2 the parent/carer will be invited to attend a planning meeting with Mrs Young. The aim of this meeting is to agree on an action plan to improve the child's attendance. As part of the plan it may be that the support of other agencies is explored, such as the School Nurse, Early Help or any other specialist support within the school.

Schools cannot routinely authorise absence where a child's attendance has reached 'Letter 2' level of concern and this will be discussed at the meeting. If the parent/carer does not attend the meeting, an alternative date may be given, if not the parent/carer will be called to discuss the concerns and a review meeting agreed in 4-6 weeks' time.

Where families fail to engage with the school or attendance does not improve from the date of the meeting, a 'Notice to improve' may be issued. This follows the Government guidance issued in ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#).

Attendance will be reviewed after the agreed period of time (4-6 weeks) and if attendance is improving it will continue to be closely monitored. If there is no improvement in attendance the school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council. In some circumstances, where there are persistent and serious concerns, legal proceedings are brought against parent/carers [Under section 444 of The Education Act 1996](#).

Pupils are considered to be 'Persistently absent' when their attendance falls below 90%. This low level of attendance causes increasing concern and therefore more regular monitoring will be triggered.

The school uses national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absences are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes are used:

= planned whole school closure

/ = Present in the morning

\ = Present in the afternoon

L = Late arrival before the register has closed

C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances

S = Study leave

C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad

C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils

E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made

J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews

I = Illness

M = Medical or dental appointments

K = Attending provision arranged by the LA

R = Religious observance

B = Off-site education activity

G = Unauthorised holiday

O = Unauthorised absence

U = Arrived after registration closed

N = Reason not yet provided

X = Not required to be in school

T = Traveller absence

Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.

V = Educational visit or trip

P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person

D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

W = Attending work experience

Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available

Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption

Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed

Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention

Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend

Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.

Z = Pupil not on admission register

Section 5 – Working in Partnership with BCP Council and Other Agencies

Data sharing with BCP Council takes place regularly as explained in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'.

Targeting Support meetings are held with the BCP Council School Inclusion Team to agree joint approaches for persistently absent (below 90%) and severely absent (below 50%) pupils.

Attendance information is appropriately shared with other partner agencies, such as Children Services, Health and the Special Education Needs Department.

Section 6 - Requiring Additional Medical Information

As described earlier, schools cannot routinely authorise absences where there are attendance concerns. Medical information may take many forms, depending upon the circumstances. When the school is aware of a pupil with a specific medical condition (for example when an NHS paediatrician's letter is received or if there is a Health Care Plan in place) then this will support the need for the child to have ongoing absences and means that the parent/carer will not need to provide updated information after every absence.

Schools should only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where they need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I (illness) is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school for the session in question.

In cases where there is no confirmed underlying health condition, additional medical information can take whatever form the school deems as appropriate and might include:

- GP/dental appointment card
- Prescription label
- or the school's direct observation.

However, if there are any doubts, the school will take advice from the BCP Council School Inclusion Worker and other Health Services to understand the level of attendance that could be reasonably expected for a particular condition.

Section 7 - Managing Lateness

Being ready for learning is essential, and being late is disruptive to your child and the rest of the class, specifically if this becomes habitual.

If a pupil arrives at school after the start of the school day but by 9:15am, they will be registered as 'late' (L). Lateness beyond 9:15am will be counted as an absence and coded as a 'Late after register closes' unauthorised absence (U) for the whole morning session, unless the parent/carer can provide the school with an acceptable reason.

The school will contact parent/carers if a child regularly arrives at school late. Teachers and other staff who notice a problem with punctuality will consult with the Headteacher before communication is made with the parent/carers regarding the matter.

Persistent arrival after the designated school start time, over a week can build to losing over two and a half hours of learning time. This also has a significant impact on how a child settles into the school day and how they are able to access their learning. For this reason persistent lateness will be addressed. Where a pupil has periods of persistent lateness a monitoring letter will be sent. If a pupil has 10 periods of absence marked as a U code within a 10 week period a fine may be issued. Lateness is monitored in the same way as attendance is monitored.

Section 8 - Parent/Carers Notifying the School of Absence and 'First Day Contact'

Parent/carers are required to contact the school on the first day of their child's absence and every day thereafter. If it is clear from the initial communication on day one that the absence will extend for a given period (for example, a child who has an infectious illness), it is not necessary for the school to be notified every day. If, however, the absence period becomes protracted beyond the original expected timeframe the parent/carer should contact the school again.

This is an important aspect of the schools' safeguarding procedures: if a child is not registered at school in the morning, then schools must satisfy themselves that the child is safe. It is therefore necessary for parent/carers to contact the school every day by telephone, the Arbor app or email by 9.15am and ensure they give the reason for their child's absence. The absence will be recorded as authorised with an I Code, provided that the reason for absence is significant and that there are no current concerns about the child's attendance.

Office staff will contact parents/carers on the first day that a pupil is absent where there has not been an explanation. For any families who are within our safeguarding remit a telephone call will be made and a message will be left if the call is not answered. This will also be the case for any pupils whose attendance is of concern and are on an Attendance plan. In some circumstances, for example if there has been an extended period of no contact, then a home visit will be made.

If the Headteacher has any cause for concern about the reason given for any absence, it will remain unauthorised (O coded) until the matter has been discussed with the parent/carers and a satisfactory explanation secured. If the school does not accept the reason given the absence will remain unauthorised. For the absence to be authorised, there must have been no reasonable way in which the child could have come to school.

Home visits will be routinely completed where pupils are absent for more than 10 school days, this is the school's duty of care. A home visit may also be taken if we are unable to contact parents/carers and if attempts to contact other listed additional contacts have been unsuccessful. Additional contacts should be updated by parent/carers annually or when required.

Section 9 - Appointments During the Day

Parent/carers must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parent/carers must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for his/her own appointment—not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a parent/carer can attend an appointment or for anyone else. Where possible, the pupil is expected to be in school either side of the appointment.

Section 10 - Leave of Absence during term time

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether any request is considered as 'exceptional circumstances' rests solely with the Headteacher.

The school will make parents/carers aware of the arrangements for requesting leave of absence, including the implications of taking unauthorised absence, through publication of this policy on the school's website and also through other opportunities including information packs for new parents/carers and regular newsletters.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

In considering whether to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time the Headteacher will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school in writing. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances.

Only the parent/carer the child resides with can make an application for a leave of absence.

The following are examples of situations which could be considered as exceptional:

- Return of parent/carer from active service (Forces)
- Death or terminal illness of a parent/carer, stepparent or sibling
- Young Carers
- Disability or respite leave
- Periods of obligatory religious observance
- Attendance at a wedding or christening of an immediate family member ('immediate' defined as parents and siblings)

The following are examples of situations which would not typically be considered exceptional:

- Family holiday / cheaper holiday dates
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time
- Attendance at a wedding or christening (unless it relates to immediate family)
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK
- Limitations on parents'/carers' leave entitlement or dates or parents'/carers' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays
- A family member going for medical treatment abroad which could be reasonably carried out in the UK

Parent/carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity.

When a leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence because the reasons are not considered 'exceptional', the school may request that BCP Council issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). In considering whether to request an FPN, the school will have due regard to the latest advice and guidance. If a period of 5 or more days (10 school sessions) unauthorised absence is taken, the school will request that BCP Council issue a FPN. All FPN fines will be requested on a, "per parent, per child" basis.

Any leave of absence that is taken and not requested will be unauthorised and an FPN considered.

Section 11 - Legal Intervention/Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)/Prosecution

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not have the desired effect, further interventions including the use of legal measures will be considered.

Where there are continued concerns, parents/carers will be issued a 'notice to improve' as a final opportunity for parents/carers to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each situation will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice, another tool, or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Following the introduction of the new National Framework August 2024 (detailed in Government Guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance') the fine for school absences across the country will be £80, per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. If the FPs are not paid, legal proceedings follow under The Education Act 1996. Any Penalty notice issued will be in line with BCP Councils code of conduct and the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent/carer receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160, per parent- per child.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other actions like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If a parent/carer is prosecuted and attends court because of their child's attendance at school a fine of up to £2,500 could be issued.

FPN & Prosecutions under section 444 of The Education Act 1996 are considered for holiday absence and for non-school attendance. Attempts will always be made to offer support and identify an improvement plan in the cases of non-school attendance.

Section 12 - Off-Site Education or Specialist Provision

Where a child's special educational needs are recognised by the school, and where the special tuition/therapy required is not available in school, the Headteacher may authorise absence for specific times allowing such tuition or therapy may be given outside school.

Section 13 - Absence for Performance & Sporting Activities

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence for approved public performances provided that clear communication is provided about the approved nature of activity. In respect of sporting events, the level of performance is expected to be at least at a county level and with formal contact from the sporting club.

The following will also be considered in reaching a decision:

- The nature and purpose of the performance and whether the local authority has issued a performance license.
- The frequency of absence requested and the likely impact on the child's education and progress
- The child's attendance record

Section 14 - Religious Observance

Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parent/carers for absence on the grounds of religious observance on days that are exclusively set by the religious body. The school will define this as a day when the pupils' parent/carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body where clarification is required.

Section 15 - Gypsy Roma and Traveller Absence

Where a pupil's parent/carer belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent/carer will be expected to request absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will only be granted for reasons relating to travel for occupational purposes and not for any other reason.

Section 16 - SEND

School recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attending school than their peers. The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils, to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with EHC plans or Individual health plans that are in place.

The School aims to support all pupils to access their education on a regular basis, in line with the national and local expectations.

Section 17 – The Impact of Absences

The table below shows the consequences of poor attendance on a child.

