

**ATTENDANCE AND
PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

This Policy operates in accordance with the framework and advice contained within the Kent guidance on achieving and maintaining high attendance, which the school and its Governing Body intend to follow.

EWO – Education Welfare Officer	EWS – Education Welfare Service
SIMS – School Information Management System	

N.B. The term 'parent' should also be taken to mean the person with care responsibilities.

Principles

- Regular and full-time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life.
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life.
- It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day of an absence.
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school;
- Clarify the role of the parents/carer.

The school will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority;
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued;
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents;
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education;
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life;
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using a computer based registration system, and absences are followed up promptly;
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services, etc);
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence;

- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality;
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents;
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs;
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality;
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence.

Strategies to promote and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality

- All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance on the school's website.
- The newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder.
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work.
- Reward children and groups of children for high attendance.
- Maintain up to date records within the SIMS system.

We expect the parent to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address;
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence;
- Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing;
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return;
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen;
- Provide a note when the child returns from absence due to sickness. This should be on the first day of the child's return to school;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made;
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through the SIMS Attendance Module. Class teachers complete a registration sheet twice daily and return it to the office.

Weekly absence reports are printed and reasons for absence recorded using the relevant codes:

M	medical or dental appointments
I	sickness
L	late before registers closed
U	late after registers closed (with reasons)
C	other authorised circumstances (exceptional)
H	annual family holiday
F	extended family holiday (agreed)
G	family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
N	no reason yet provided for absence
V	school journey
R	religious activities
E	exclusion
O	unauthorised absence

Registers close at 9.20 a.m. Lateness after this time is classed an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons, e.g. sickness, religious observance, absence following the death of a close member of the family, attendance at an interview or examination, participation in a regional or national sporting event or an approved holiday (see below).

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is kept off school because a parent is ill;
- A child is absent because a sibling is ill;
- The parent cannot get the child to school;
- The child is taken on a shopping trip;
- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat;
- A child is absent due to family work patterns;
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home;
- A child is more than half an hour late without a satisfactory explanation.

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors' Report and to the DfES.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment a note must be received by the class teacher before the appointment. When a child returns from a period of absence due to sickness, a note must be provided. The class teacher dates and signs all notes so that the school secretary may complete the weekly absence report.

If a child has been absent without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. Should this result in a nil response, the Headteacher will write informing the parent of the Policy and the school's duty to inform the Education Welfare Officer about the child's lack of attendance.

Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 90% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and, where appropriate, discussed with the EWO during one of their regular visits.

Holidays

Parents are asked not to take their children away on holiday during term time if at all possible.

If this cannot be avoided, e.g. in the case of rostered holidays, the appropriate form may be obtained from the school office. Upon receipt of this form, which must be completed well before the holiday commences, up to ten term days may be authorised for the event of an annual family holiday. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher and may not always be granted. The reasons must be made clear to the Headteacher in the relevant section. Parents are asked to reflect on the effect that this time out of school will have on their child's learning when requesting such authorisation. **Parents have no right to demand that absences are authorised. (Regulation 8 of the Education Regulations 1995 applies).**

More than ten days may be permitted at the Headteacher's discretion in *exceptional* circumstances.

The holiday must be to accompany parents and must be for the **annual family holiday** and **not** a second or subsequent holiday. It may not be used for odd half days or days either side of a weekend. **There is not an entitlement to a cumulative total of 10 days holiday on separate occasions.**

Parents of children in Years 2 and 6 are particularly requested to avoid taking their holiday in Term 5 when the end of KS1 and 2 statutory tests take place. **Absences will not be authorised during preparation for and administration of SATs.**

If a pupil goes on holiday without permission from the Headteacher, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the EWS will be informed.

All other requests for absences due to other circumstances must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance.

Punctuality

The playground is supervised from 8.40 a.m. The school day begins at 8.55 a.m. and the register will be taken as soon as possible after this. Children arriving after 8.55 a.m. should report to the school office. The registers close at 9.20 a.m.; any children arriving after this time without a reason for doing so will be regarded as being absent without authorisation.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply with them. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education, but also that of others in the class.

Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and/or Social Services where relevant.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility can be agreed with the Headteacher.

Medical Appointments

Parents must sign their child(ren) out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day. A log is kept for the purpose. Parents should come to the office, where the office staff will contact the classroom and ask that the child comes down to reception to meet their parent/carer.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

All staff will be expected to comply with this Policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.