



# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2024 - 2025**

**Approved: September 2024**

**Review: September 2025**

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

### **Introduction**

This Policy has been agreed by the Governors, Staff and Pupils of both King's Hill and Salisbury Schools. It represents our commitment to striving for excellent attendance, which is achievable, and achieved by many children.

It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the schools will undertake. Strategies for improving attendance, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy has been updated taking account of and reflecting the guidance in 'Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024 and it will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Department for Education: Key Aims of the National Framework are:

- Make penalty notices more effective
- Prioritise the support first approach
- Improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England
- Improve the deterrent effect of a penalty notice

### **The law on school attendance and the right to a full-time education.**

The law entitles every child of compulsory age to an efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. Where parents decide to have their child educated at school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly. This means their child should attend every day the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Schools with the high attainment at the end of key stage 2 have the highest attendance rates.

### **The importance of school attendance**

Improving school attendance is everyone's responsibility. At King's hill and Salisbury we know that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates. The foundation for good attendance is that the school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment for all pupils.

Both schools recognise that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school therefore we will work in partnership with our parents and pupils to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and ensuring the right support is in place.

### **The value of consistently good attendance and the impact of absence from school**

By the end of KS2 pupils who have consistently good attendance significantly outperform those with lower attendance. Pupil outcomes in England indicate that average attendance for pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths is 96.5% whereas average attendance for those not achieving the expected standard is 95.3%.

We know that consistently good attendance is important as gaps in attainment for children who fail to reach age-related expectations become increasingly difficult to close once they appear and this is particularly the case for children whose attendance is lower.

Missing a few days of school here and there may not seem particularly significant, however research shows that it has a significant impact on children's learning. Children who develop a pattern of missing school now and again fall behind their peers, and struggle to catch up. Patterns of poor attendance often begin in primary school and children who fall into this pattern of poor attendance are more likely to underachieve at secondary school.

Friendships are also affected by persistent absence. It is more difficult for children who miss school to form stable relationships with their classmates and research shows that children who have difficulty forming stable friendships are significantly more likely to underperform at school.

### **Principles**

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is the legal responsibility of each parent/carer to ensure this happens.
- Attending school aids intellectual, social and emotional development.
- Attending school safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989 and other associated pieces of legislation.

### **Aims of this Policy**

- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of excellent attendance.
- To ensure that all children attend school as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge our duty to safeguard its pupils effectively.
- To ensure that all those responsible for a child's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors, understand and accept their responsibilities with respect to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, including term time leave for the purpose of holidays and travel thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances and maximise the potential of our children and young people and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.
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### **Policy objectives**

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children
- To reduce persistent absence
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil

## Promoting Attendance

The Governors, Head Teacher and staff use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include:

- Newsletters
- Attendance celebration assemblies
- Termly certificates and prizes for above 97% attendance, both individually and classes
- Targeting children and families with daily check in phone calls and praise
- Attendance mentoring with relevant children
- Friendly meet and greet with praise on the gate for attending school
- Checking worry boxes to identify children who communicate worries which are impacting upon attendance
- Attendance Workshops for parents throughout the year

## Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Understanding types of absence coding - Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. There are a number of ways you can inform us if your child is not able to attend school:

- Phone call to main office
- In person at the main school office
- Leave a voicemail message
- Via Parent mail or email at [postox@kings-hill.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:postox@kings-hill.walsall.sch.uk) or [postbox@salisbury.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:postbox@salisbury.walsall.sch.uk)

Illness: Please inform us of details of your child's illness e.g. vomiting and diarrhoea, very high temp, chicken pox etc. Please do not use terms such as unwell, ill or sick as this will not be authorised.

Medical evidence of illness will be required in the form of a prescription, prescribed medication, GP appointment confirmation for absence of 3 days or more. If advised to take over the counter medications, this also can be shown as proof of absence.

If your child requires medication during the day, staff are able to administer or supervise this, you will need to complete a form with details of the medication and dosage required, please see our office team regarding this.

We ask that dental, optician appointments and wherever possible GP appointments are arranged outside of school hours. Appointments during the school day must be supported by evidence of the appointment in order for this to be authorised.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, birthdays etc.
- Minding younger children in the family.
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell.
- Leave during term time that has not been agreed.

## Understanding Absence Percentages

The information below indicates how attendance can affect your child's future progression, this is based on end of academic year attendance percentage.

### **Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year – Less than 30 Hours of Learning Lost**

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best levels/grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school, which will help in the future.

### **95%: 10 days absence a year – 50 Hours of Learning Lost**

These pupils are less likely to achieve their target levels/grades and will start to find it difficult to maintain a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2-week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

### **90%: 19 days absence a year – 95 Hours of Learning Lost**

The Government classes pupils in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work and achieve their target levels/grades. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the local authority, including the issuing of Penalty Notices and Fines.

**A child whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education  
by the time they leave school**

### **Reluctant attenders/school refusal**

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or something else that may be troubling them, please discuss this with us at the earliest opportunity and we will do everything possible to support your child and resolve any issues. Accepting your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

In the first instance, please always have a discussion with your child's class teacher or phase leader.

The school's attendance lead officer, Mrs Richards can also be contacted and will offer support and advice including attendance mentoring.

### **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

- **Registration and punctuality procedures**

Registers are taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8:50am, and again at the start of the afternoon session following your child's lunch break. The registers remain open for 30 minutes. We have a soft start to the beginning of the day, this means that children are able to go into class from 8.30am at King's Hill and 8.40am at Salisbury. Children arriving after 8.50 will be coded as "L" ("Late") this code represents a present mark. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be coded "U" ("Late after registers close") which counts as an unauthorised absence.

Schools are required to record a reason for lateness and the time of arrival, on the sign in/out system by a parent/carer. If a pupil is persistently late, a member of the attendance team or a senior member of staff will arrange to meet with the child's parent/carer.

Class teachers and senior members of staff can authorise day to day absences, if the reason for the absence is known and satisfactory, if there is not a known reason for the absence at registration, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as "O" ("Unauthorised absence"). Communication received from parents/carers regarding absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action.

- **First Day Absence Contact**

Parents are expected to notify us if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. If we do not receive notification, we will contact the parent/carer via an email or telephone call on the first day of absence, a visit to the family home may also take place to ascertain the reason for absence. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day in order to notify parents as quickly as possible, children who may have set off for school but not arrived.

- **Continuing Absence Procedures**

In the event of further absences without contact from the family, another home visit will be made.

- **Frequent / Persistent Absence Procedures**

Weekly checks of class registers will be made to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to persistent absence ("PA"), that is to say absence of 10% or more in a half term. The parents of any child whose attendance is a cause for concern will be informed by letter. If attendance continues to be a concern parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Attendance Team. The purpose of this meeting will be to provide tailored support including signposting sources of support if needed and set targets for improvement. If the child's attendance continually fails to improve, we may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or initiate court action.

- **Nursery Persistent Absence Procedures**

Although education for Nursery aged pupils is not compulsory, at both schools we see full attendance within our Nursery setting as essential for a successful start for their educational journey. If Nursery attendance falls below 90% we will reserve the right to take the child off our roll and the place could be offered to the next child on our waiting list.

- **Leave During Term Time**

In usual circumstances, leave during term time will not be authorised. This is in accordance with government guidance. The Head Teacher may exercise discretion in the **MOST EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances.

Applications for leave during term time must be submitted in writing, (notification of leave form) ensuring adequate time for the application to be considered and responded to. If term time leave is taken without permission this will result in a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

- **Consequence of Poor Attendance/Punctuality**

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been put in place, and attendance is below 90%, the ultimate consequences will be one of the following:

- **A Penalty Notice**

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if not paid within 28 days.**

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.

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

Where a pupil meets the threshold for a penalty notice and they have changed schools (including primary to secondary) the current school must complete an Education Penalty Notice History Check.

Legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.

In some cases, action may need to be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of a child.

- **Safeguarding**

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance and exclusion with crime and antisocial behaviour, and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

- **Children who cease to attend without prior notification. Child missing education (CME)**

Procedures for trying to trace children who cease to attend without prior notification are covered in detail in the Safeguarding Policy, which can be found on our school website. However, if after ten days continuous absence we have been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, we will refer the child's details to the local authority for it to perform further checks that are not available to us, continued unauthorised absence can result in the local authority instructing us remove children from the school roll.

- **Non Starters**

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If we have been unable to contact the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, we will refer the pupils to the Local Authority CME team for further checks.

- **Vulnerable Children**

Children who are Looked After ("LAC"), subject to a Child Protection Plan ("CP"), and/or Child in Need ("CIN") will be treated with the highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Team. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home, a home visit and the information given to the designated LAC co-ordinator or a call to The Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub ("MASH"), in order that a same-day visit can be made. Children with Special Educational Needs ("SEND") will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

- **SEND children and those with medical needs**

The schools recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to their attendance than their peers. However, the right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these children is the same as they are for any other pupil. The schools will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. All pupils are entitled to a full-time education however in exceptional circumstances and only if it is in the best interests of the child a child may need a temporary part time timetable. This should only be in place for the shortest time necessary.

- **Working with other agencies**

Both schools undertake to work with the full range of agencies working with families to improve children's attendance. This is particularly important in complex cases and where children are severely absent (missing 50% of school or more) and which require a broader response to address the barriers that a family might be facing.

References:

**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66cef97ca7256f1cd83a89a3/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66cef97ca7256f1cd83a89a3/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)

**Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024.**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)



## Appendix 1



### Rewards

#### Individual Attendance Awards - Termly

Bronze, Silver, Gold badges will be awarded throughout the year.

In autumn term, children will receive bronze, spring term silver and summer term Gold (Bronze and Silver can also be earned to children that then have above 97% in the spring and summer terms)



**All pupils above 97% for the school year will be rewarded at the end of the summer term.**

Note:

Pupils with attendance above 97% receive 3 golden tickets for the end of term prize draw, thereby increasing their chances of winning. Pupils with 100% for the school year will be rewarded with an individual prize.

#### Class Awards - Weekly and each half term

Each week, the class with the highest attendance will receive the attendance certificate to be displayed on their classroom door, hold the school attendance trophy and each pupil will receive a class Dojo. Parents will be informed via the school website on the attendance page.

Each week all classes are visited by a member of SLT to award a sticker to each pupil that has 100% attendance for that week

The class with the highest attendance each half term will be awarded a certificate, trophy and take part in a class activity of their choice.

#### Class Award - End of year

The class with the highest attendance at the end of the school year will receive a special Headteacher's reward – after discussion/agreement with the pupils.

## **Improving attendance/punctuality**

### **30 day challenge:**

As soon as a pupil's attendance falls below 90% we set a 30 day challenge for them. Parent / carers will receive notification of this to encourage improvement. If when complete, their attendance has improved, they will receive a certificate and a prize.

At the end of the 30 day challenge attendance has improved and is between **90% - 95%** they will receive **one golden ticket**. If attendance has improved and is above **95%** they will receive **two golden tickets**.

**Pupils' names will be placed into a prize draw, at the end of the term, to win one of the following prizes or similar:**

**£10 family voucher. £25 family voucher. £50 family voucher**

### **Meeting with Parents/Carers:**

We will invite parents/carers to discuss attendance/punctuality concerns and how we can support them, at the earliest opportunity.