



The Kingfisher Schools Federation

Attendance Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The Kingfisher Schools Federation is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community - pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors - have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.

The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this. The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the committee know of the policy and have access to it.

2. OBJECTIVES

The Kingfisher Schools Federation recognises that regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*:

Be healthy

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development;
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy;



Stay safe

- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children;
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly;

Enjoy and achieve

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings;

Make a positive contribution

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others;

Achieve economic well-being

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style;

3. AIMS, SCOPE & RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 All staff (teaching and support), within The Kingfisher Schools Federation, have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils / students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

3.2 ***Attendance Leader (Mrs Bunn @ Barnby & North Cove Primary School and Mrs Clark @ Southwold Primary School)***

A member of the School will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.



This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils / students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly.

(They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

3.3 **School Drop Off**

For safeguarding purposes, parents are expected to accompany their children to the School Playground by 8.40a.m. On attendance of the Morning Duty Teacher parents are asked to leave the Playground for the School Gate to be closed and locked at 8.45a.m. Parents should not leave their children unattended, until the Duty Teacher is on duty.

Parents are asked not to use the School Office as a short cut to the Playground, or to drop children off to the School Office, unless in the event of them being late.

3.4 **School Collection**

For safeguarding purposes, the School Gate will be unlocked at 3.00p.m. and parents should wait for their children to be accompanied out of School with their class teacher, for departure.

3.3 **Registration**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

The register will be called promptly at **8.45 am** (Barnby) and **9.00a.m.** (Southwold) and **1.00 pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers will close at **8.55 am** (Barnby) and **9.05am** (Southwold) and **1.00 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.4 on page 6).



3.4 ***Categorising absence***

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time must register at the School Office for safeguarding reasons.

Lateness will be marked unauthorised absence, unless leave has been granted by the school in advance, or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate.

Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the classroom teacher.

4. **ABSENCE & SAGEGUARDING**

4.1 The Kingfisher Federation recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm.

If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff within the Kingfisher Schools Federation will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school and will be taken in line with this policy.**

4.2 If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances: where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:-

4.3 a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;



- 4.4 a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion - in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered;
- 4.5 **exceptional** circumstances, for which the parents have sought permission in advance; i.e. family funeral, etc and for a very limited period;
- 4.6 where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- 4.7 where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards - or send him / her to school beforehand;
- 4.8 where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control; e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- 4.9 the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- 4.10 the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight), or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- 4.11 the pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be **unauthorised**. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.



4.12 *Approved educational activity*

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

4.13 *Truancy*

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of pupils. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school office and measures taken to locate the pupil.

4.14 *Post-registration Truancy*

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm.

The Kingfisher Federation Schools takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

4.15 *Staff Training*

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

5. Collection and analysis of data

- 5.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfES within the stipulated time frame.



6. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 6.1 Attendance has a very high profile within The Kingfisher Schools Federation and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.
- 6.2 The Kingfisher Federation has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The School Office contacts parents by phone and then by letter. EWO are informed if a pupil's attendance drops below 85% within a half term. These strategies include:-

First day calling

The Kingfisher Schools Federation has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence.

This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences.

Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit - usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Lateness Letters

Letters will be issued to Parents/Carers in the event that a pupil is consistently or frequently late for registration, or is late for 3 rolling sessions in a week.

If lateness persists, we will inform the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the matter with parents.



Less than 90% Attendance

Letters will be issued to Parents/Carers in the event that a pupil attendance is less than 90% and advising that any further absence will need to have medical evidence of illness from a G.P.

Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

- 6.3 If a child misses 6 sessions from school; i.e. three whole school days, a Fixed Penalty Notice Referral will be submitted by the school to the Education Welfare Officer. **A Fixed Penalty Fine will be issued for £60.00 per child, per parent.**

7. LATENESS & PUNCTUALITY

- 7.1 Pupils / students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time, every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late.

Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late.

Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence.

Letters will be issued to Parents/Carers in the event that a pupil is consistently or frequently late for registration, or is late for 3 rolling sessions in a week.

If lateness persists, we will inform the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the matter with parents.

- 7.2 For health and safety reasons, it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office, for registration. **It is important that all pupils arriving late following this procedure.**



7.3 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately, (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, complete the book outside the school office.

7.4 5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost of year
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
15 minutes late every day - 10 days of school lost a year

8. Term-time Holidays

Term-time holidays will not be authorised under any circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is **not a right**. An application for holiday authorisation will only be approved under the most exceptional circumstances; i.e. when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term;
- due to work commitments;

If parents/carers intend to take their children out of school during term-time, the Kingfisher Federation requests that we are informed in writing, as a courtesy to the Class Teacher and to assist them in prepare work for the child(ren), if appropriate.

9. Extended leave of absence

The Kingfisher Schools Federation will not authorise requests for extended leave of absence, unless under exceptional circumstances.

10. Sickness

In the event of a child being genuinely ill, parents are expected to inform the School Office each day that they are not attending school. If a child has a sickness or diarrhoea bug, they should not attend school for 48 hours from the last occurrence of sickness or diarrhoea.



However, they are expected to return to school after the 48 hours period, on the day that this ends. For example, if a child is last poorly at 10.00am Sunday morning, they would be expected to return to school at 10.00am on Tuesday morning.

11. Transition Days

In respect of children who are moving to another primary school, they will remain 'on roll' at either Barnby & North Cove, or Southwold Primary Schools, until they are formally enrolled to their new school and notified by that school that they have enrolled the pupil. At this point, we will remove the child from our list.

As such, a pupil will be expected to attend school until the day on which they attend another school, without any break between the two.

In respect of Year 6 pupils who transition to high school, they will remain 'on roll' at either Barnby & North Cove, or Southwold Primary Schools, until they are formally enrolled to their new school, from the September of the new school year.

Until such time, they will remain the responsibility of The Kingfisher Schools Federation. They may attend the formal transition days at their new schools by agreement of The Kingfisher Schools Federation; however, they must continue to attend school at Barnby & North Cove, or Southwold Primary Schools, until the end of the school year.

If absence occurs between the formal transition days and the end of the school year, this will be classed as unauthorised absence and referred to the Education Welfare Officer accordingly.

12. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by The Kingfisher Schools Federation.

The Kingfisher Schools Federation expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to authorise any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.



Parents will also be expected to:

- notify the appropriate School on the first day of absence by telephone;
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the Federation and School, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the School without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The Kingfisher Schools Federation will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

13. Pupils' / students' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class Teacher. Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

14. Governors' responsibilities

The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Section 175 (2)



MONITORING & EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.
The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.
This Policy is due for Review in March 2017.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be formally implemented with effect from September 2014.

This policy was adopted at a Meeting of the full Governing Body on _____.

Mr John Beckett
Chair of Governors

Mrs Ruth Nixon
Head Teacher



REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances