

Kincraig Primary School and Nursery



Attendance Policy – School Children



Kinraig Primary School and Nursery **Attendance Policy**

At Kinraig Primary School and Nursery we are committed to providing a full and efficient education for all our pupils. Regular attendance and punctuality will ensure maximum benefit is derived from the school and nursery's curriculum both in academic and personal development.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Kinraig Primary School and Nursery Pastoral Care Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- PREVENT duty guidance (2015)
- Working together to improve school attendance (2022) Non-Statutory
- Mental Health issues affecting a pupils attendance (2023)

And also statutory guidance documents:

- Parental responsibility measures
- Children missing in Education
- Supporting Children with medical conditions in schools
- Suspensions and Exclusions
- Alternative Provisions

Introduction:

At Kinraig Primary School and Nursery we aim to create a calm, positive and welcoming environment where pupils feel happy and secure, and where the whole school community feels valued whatever their gender, race or ability so that we all develop a sense of pride in both ourselves and the school.

We want to enable each child to achieve their full potential through a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which motivates and stimulates them and allows pupils to become effective and independent learners.

And finally promote to parents, children and partners the importance of good attendance and punctuality in order to support a child's development and help them to progress. We believe that by successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing the barriers to attendance at home we can work collaboratively and improve attendance.

Expectations for Attendance:

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school. By promoting the benefits of good attendance at school, setting high expectations for each pupil and clearly communicating these with parents. See Appendix A.

In Working Together to improve school attendance it states, 'Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.'

At Kincaig Primary School and Nursery:

We will avoid unauthorised absences by:

- Developing a close liaison with parents.
- Providing effective pastoral care.
- Showing staff commitment to full attendance.
- Monitoring attendance.
- Working closely with the Pupil Welfare Officer and relevant agencies.
- Praising good attendance and punctuality.

Expectations of Pupils

- They attend school regularly
- They arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the day

Expectations from parents

- They ensure their children attend regularly and punctually.
- They ensure they contact school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever a child is unable to attend.
- They contact school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents and Pupils can expect from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.

Recording Attendance

The registers are taken at 8:45am for the morning session, and 1:15pm for the afternoon session using SIMS.

Any child who arrives after these times will be recorded as late up to 9.05am or 1:35pm. After these times they will be recorded as arriving late after the register has closed (unauthorised absence). The school administrators transfer and monitor all attendance data on the school's electronic system.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

All parents are asked to contact the school as soon as possible explaining the reason for their child's absence. If a child is absent from school after the register has closed and the school has not been informed of the reason for the absence then every attempt will be made to contact the child's family and ascertain the reason for the absence.

Parents have multiple ways of contacting the school to inform them of absences. This can be done through the Sickness line, Parent App and Seesaw. Phone calls direct to the school office can also be made or emails to the school admin line.

Mr Richard Aspden and **Mrs Jayne Caldwell** are the attendance officers within school and will monitor the children's absences on a daily basis, liaising with the Head teacher and PWO when a child's absence becomes a concern.

In *Working Together to improve School Attendance 2023*, it states that head teacher should only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances otherwise the absence will be unauthorised.

If a Head teacher grants leave request, it will be for the Head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. The decision to authorise absence is based on their assessment of the situation. Circumstances vary from school to school and so there can be no absolute rules on this subject.

Points the Head Teacher will consider:

- Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Heads will rightly prioritise attendance. The school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.
- Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is not considered exceptional circumstance.
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Absence for bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Schools may wish to take the needs of families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.
- It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when making decisions.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Procedures for following up absences – See Appendix B

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted if possible on the first day of absence.
- Where there is no response, a text message will be sent later that day and another the following day. Pastoral care soft intelligence noted and/or there may be a visit from the Pupil Welfare Officer where the service is already involved.
- If we are still unable to contact the family on the 5th day the Pupil Welfare Officer will be informed and an external line of enquiry initiated to identify the reason for absence.
- If no contact is made after 10 days the PWO will follow a higher level of enquiry checklist and where this does not result in contact being made the PWO will inform the Police and Children's Social Care and the child/children will be placed on the Children Missing for Education School Register paying due regard to the Local Authority's PREVENT STRATEGY to 'safeguard young people'.
- Where we have a reason for non-attendance but this continues beyond a reasonable timescale, the parents will be contacted to discuss the situation. Depending on the outcome of this conversation the case may be discussed with the Pupil Welfare Officer for the school and further action planned. This might, in appropriate cases, result in a referral to the PWO.

Reintegration

- The return to school for a pupil after a long-term absence requires special planning. For example a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) may be appropriate.
- Designated staff (the teacher for that class, the learning mentor and/or the SENDCo) will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
- Staff are aware that this could be a difficult process that may require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part time re-entry with support in class as appropriate.

The success of the reintegration will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Medical/Dental Appointments:

Where a child is present for registration and an appointment card has been seen or parent/carer has informed the school, the child is marked as legally present. When collected for the appointment their name will be logged on the appropriate sheet in the school office. If the child is returned to school during a session, this will also be logged for fire/emergency purposes. Children absent at registration but returning from an appointment later will also be logged on the movement sheet. Notes regarding medical appointments are retained in the same way as absence notes. If a child attends a morning appointment and is not in school for the afternoon registration, this will be recorded as unauthorised unless the parent has informed the school and given a justification for the extended absence.

Lateness:

We believe that punctuality is an important trait to be developed for life not just at school, therefore we endeavour to encourage all our pupils to be in the school grounds just before the gates open at 8.35am, so that they can enter school and complete the registration process promptly. Any child arriving after the 8.45am must report to the school office. A note will be made of the names of those pupils who arrive late and their parent/carers will be reminded of the school start times should it be recognised that such arrival is frequent. Those children arriving after their name has been called will be marked as late. Registers filled in on SIMs and are saved by 8.50am and they are then closed at 9.05am. Any child arriving after this time without an acceptable reason will be marked as unauthorised absence. In addition to the school's monitoring of late attenders, the PWO also carries out regular checks through the register screening and through visits to the school. The attendance officers will also carry out regular late gates, where a member of staff will be present to discuss in more depth the reason for lateness and how the school can support the family to improve.

Children not collected on time:

If no contact can be made to parents/carers despite school's efforts, the school will keep the child until 4.00pm. After this time the school will have no choice but to contact the Pupil Welfare Service, who in turn if no contact can be made will ask Social Care to take the child into appropriate care for the evening.

Suspended / Excluded Pupils, Pupils registered at a PRU or Special Unit:

Where a child has been given a suspension or exclusion, the accepted mark will be made in the register. The same also applies when a pupil has been transferred to a Serf or PRU while remaining on the school's admission register.

Monitoring Attendance Data

We analyse attendance data regularly and will inform parents if a child's attendance is of concern. **Mrs Jayne Caldwell** (administrator) is responsible for monitoring this data and liaising with the Senior Leadership Team – **Mr Richard Aspden**, in school and nursery and the Pupil Welfare Officer.

Average attendance nationally is 95% hence we will inform parents if their child's attendance falls below that level in any term. If attendance falls below 90% we will refer the case to the Pupil Welfare Officer, who visits school regularly. We will also analyse our data for number of broken weeks, as this can indicate a concern even if attendance is above the 95%. When an attendance issue is identified we will investigate further in looking for patterns behind the absences.

The Pupil Welfare Officer, working alongside Mrs Caldwell, highlights a target group and monitors their attendance more closely.

Positive Reinforcement of Attendance:

The school makes every effort to encourage regular attendance at school and has therefore developed a number of positive strategies to celebrate full attendance. These include:

- Parents are reminded of their responsibilities regarding absences through communications.
- The PWO targets those children who show patterns of irregular attendance through support and intervention.
- 100% attendance certificates are given each term to pupils who attend regularly.
- At the end of the year 100% attendance awards and prizes are given to all children who have arrived at school every day along with the option of attending the LA's 100% attendance party.
- Phone calls home from the SLT to parents to discuss and support the improvement of attendance where necessary.

Administration of education-related penalty notices:

At present Kincaig Primary School and Nursery do not administer any education related penalty notices for absence.

Monitoring and Evaluating

It is important to monitor the impact of the action taken to ensure that progress is being made towards improving attendance across the school. An annual target is agreed with the Local Authority, this is made known to staff and governors along with a brief action plan. Both targets and action plans are reviewed annually. The SIP process also monitors the school's progress towards its agreed attendance targets.

The impact of this policy is monitored in discussion with staff, governors, families and external services such as Pupil Welfare Service and in examination of attendance data produced termly as required by DfE.

This policy was last updated in September 2023. The Attendance Policy at Kincaig Primary School and Nursery will be reviewed and modified on a regular basis at least every two years. It is possible to add amendments to this document prior to a review and these will be incorporated into the next issue. To add comments please complete the information on the following sheet adding the date and signing where indicated.

Name of teacher responsible – Mrs Karen Appleby, Mr Richard Aspden and Mrs Jayne Caldwell

Policy approved by Governors: _____ Date: _____

Date	Proposed Amendment	<i>Signed</i>

Appendix A

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Appendix B

4 Stages in managing absences from schools and lateness

Kincraig Primary School and Nursery has a 4 stage approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these stages or even carry them out in the order listed. Parents are informed about school session times in the school prospectus and through regular newsletters.

Stage 1

- Issuing and checking registers on a daily basis, ensuring parental letters informing about absence and lateness are brought in.
- Lateness is entered into a book kept in the main school office.
- Involvement of the Mr Richard Aspden and Mrs Caldwell to monitor and discuss absence or lateness with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Initial contact with the family about absence and lateness, made by Mrs Caldwell eg first day phone calls.

Stage 2

- Mrs Caldwell will make further contact with the parent through a phone call or a meeting arranged at the school to discuss the absence or lateness. Notes of the meeting/conversation to be kept.
- If lateness or absence continues (attendance falls below 95% in a term), Mrs Caldwell will issue a reminder letter to the parents on behalf of the Head Teacher.
- A second letter will be sent for further absences or lateness (attendance does not improve or falls below 90%). This will warn the parents that the school is concerned and will be referring to the Pupil Welfare Officer.

Stage 3

- The Pupil Welfare Officer will contact the parents and arrange a meeting to discuss the absence and attempt to mediate between school and the parents to encourage the parents to send the child to school.
- The Pupil Welfare Officer will issue warning letters if the absence has approached the critical stage, ie. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a term.

Stage 4

- The Pupil Welfare Officer will assume responsibility for the case and will move this towards court action.