

KEA SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



Approved by:	Full Governors	Date: 17.03.2025
Last reviewed on:	Spring Term 2025	
Next review due by:	Spring Term 2026	

This policy reflects the DfE guidance which state:

‘Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.’

Kea School is committed to providing a full and enjoyable educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is vital. As a school we do all that we can to ensure good attendance for all pupils. Any issues that prevent full attendance will be addressed as quickly as possible. Support will be offered to families in order to help improve attendance.

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement and attendance. Regular attendance is critical for a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

The school will regularly remind parents/carers and pupils of the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Termly percentage attendance letters are sent out to parents/carers (appendix 1). We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and we will try to establish strong home-school links with families.

Improving Attendance Lead – Michael Barritt

Objectives

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and follow up non-attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives

The following will be taken into account when dealing with attendance and punctuality:

- pupils arriving after their designated start time will be marked as late
- guidance given to staff for the accurate completion of registers
- the importance of punctuality and the response to lateness
- attendance below 96% will be monitored and followed up where required (See below for our procedure for monitoring and addressing attendance concerns)
- daily contact between parents and the school when a child is absent
- in line with Public Health England guidelines, a period of 48 hours absence is required for any pupil with vomiting or diarrhoea. Such absence is authorised
- in line with Public Health England specific quarantine/absence periods are required for a number of other illnesses including chicken pox and measles
- any medical appointments taken during the school day must be evidenced wherever possible by evidence including but not limited to appointment confirmations by text, email or letter, prescriptions authorised at the appointment or any official documentation relating to the appointment
- most up to date government guidance will be taken for any symptoms of COVID-19

- clear guidance to parents that headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances (See below for some but not all examples)
- parents/carers will be contacted when their child's attendance falls below 96%
- attendance information and statistics will be included in the school newsletter and shared during whole school assemblies
- the headteacher reports on attendance at termly governor meetings

Good Attendance

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics prove a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement
- Pupils who regularly attend school make better progress, both socially and academically
- Pupils who regularly attend school find routines and schoolwork easier to cope with
- Learning is more satisfying for pupils who attend school regularly
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

Pupils are happier, healthier and achieve more in school if they attend school regularly.

Parents/carers are asked to help support their child's learning by:

- Ringing or emailing the school on the first morning of absence with the reason and estimated return date
- Arrange where possible routine medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Keep the school updated if their child's illness extends longer than originally anticipated
- Ensure that family holidays are not taken during term time (See below for guidance on unauthorised absences, including holidays in term-time)

School Roles and Responsibilities

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone and monitor absence until pupil returns to school
- Highlight the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters and Home-School Agreement
- Publish attendance information and statistics in the school newsletter
- Share attendance figures during whole school assemblies
- Send home termly attendance letters to inform parents/carers if their child's attendance is becoming a concern (appendix 1).
- Send home termly reminders of the penalty notice regime for unauthorised absences
- Registers taken at morning and afternoon sessions
- The Improving Attendance Lead, Headteacher and Governing Body monitor attendance patterns and trends
- The Headteacher is responsible for authorising leave of absence requests for exceptional circumstances during the term time

Good Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Maintaining accurate attendance records
- Having a consistent approach to marking registers
- Analysing attendance data regularly
- Promptly following up non-attendance.
- Inviting parents/carers of children with low attendance to attendance clinics with the Improving Attendance Lead
- Awarding house points to classes with good attendance.

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school. With that in mind, this is the process we will follow when monitoring attendance and following up any concerns. This is a tiered system with varying levels of support and consequences, depending on the circumstances of the concern:

1. **Pupils at 96%+** - No action required.
2. The school will contact parents/carers when pupils are absent for unauthorised reasons or to confirm in advance if a request for leave has not been authorised (See below for further information on the potential impact of this)
3. **Pupils between 93-96%** - Contact from class teachers to offer support
4. **Pupils between 90-93%** - Call from Attendance Lead or Head to offer support, including accessing an attendance clinic
5. **Pupils < 90%** - Offer meeting with Attendance Lead or Headteacher to discuss barriers to attendance and plan next steps
6. **If meetings are ignored or cancelled**, this will be logged and attempts will be made to rebook the meeting
7. If meetings continue to be unsuccessful an Education Planning Meeting will be arranged with an Education and Welfare Officer (EWO), social care representative or Governor attending
8. A final warning letter will be issued if there is no progress in improving attendance
9. EWO will be contacted to issue a Penalty warning letter, which can lead to fines or prosecution

Unauthorised absence is damaging to a pupil's education and reflects badly on the school. It also gives children the wrong message about the importance of education, which may lead to problems later in schooling. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later in life.

Unauthorised absence from school is an offence under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'Authorised absences'. For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance, music exams. On such occasions parents/carers must complete a leave of absence form (appendix 2). Please ensure that you give at least 4 weeks' notice of intended absence. Parents are not required to complete this form for illness.

Here is our list of exceptional circumstances examples, which is extensive but not exhaustive:

- Company policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time
- Service personnel returning from deployment
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a child or parent's recovery from a medical or emotional issue

- Funeral of close relative or family friend
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence
- Out of school activities such as music, arts or sport that operate at a high standard of achievement that are agreed by the Local Authority (LA)
- Religious observance
- Weddings of parents and siblings or close family that cannot be arranged at weekends or school holidays due to other factors

Evidence must be provided for each circumstance, where possible, and all alternative options considered.

Authorised absences will be notified to you during the termly attendance update. It is important to remember that although these are authorised, they are still missed education and should be kept to a minimum wherever possible.

Leave of Absence During Term Time (Exceptional Circumstances)

The school is not allowed to authorise holidays during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The headteacher will consider the following before deciding to grant leave of absence:

- The impact on the student's academic progress
- The pupil's attendance
- If the absence falls within statutory tests

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, except where that person is seriously ill.
- Availability of cheaper holidays

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when pupils are absent for a specific reason that are **not** permitted by law. These are referred to as 'Unauthorised Absences'. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Parents being ill
- Going shopping or for a haircut
- It's the child's or a relative's birthday
- Unauthorised holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

The school will contact parents/carers when pupils are absent for unauthorised reasons. The LA may consider taking legal action against those parents/carers.

From 19th August 2024, a National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, was updated following changes to the law.

1. There is a national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week* period for when a penalty notice must be considered
* A school week is any week in which the school meets at least once
2. The rules mean you can't take your child out of school for one week's holiday without the consideration of a penalty notice being issued
3. The penalty fine is £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued
4. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80
5. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the LA will need to consider other enforcement options available to them. This could include prosecution.

NB - A penalty fine can be issued for any combination of absences over a 10-week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms (including between academic years)

Lateness and Broken Weeks

As well as monitoring overall attendance figures, we will also monitor whether children arrive on time and each day. The school day is carefully planned out by teachers to maximise the learning time for children and any missed time, no matter how small, can be detrimental to their education and their ability to smoothly transition into the rest of the day.

When children arrive late, a parent or carer will be asked to sign them in at the main office and to give a reason for the lateness. If the lateness is due to a medical appointment, you will need to provide evidence whenever possible (ideally in advance of the appointment).

We can consider a penalty notice when children have unauthorised lateness of 10 school sessions within a rolling 10 school week* period.

* A school week is any week in which the school meets at least once

Please check the school website for details of the timing of the school day. We reserve the right to adjust the close of registration to a time that suits the school day.

We will also monitor whether children are regularly having weeks that are incomplete (broken) and whether there is a pattern to this. We will offer support to try to overcome any barriers that might be causing this such as changes of adults in school, issues with transportation from home, particular lessons the child is less keen on or friendship issues.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance of their child at school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to set realistic targets for attendance monitoring purposes.

School Target

Our school target for attendance is set at 96%.

Persistent Absence Definition

Attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence.

Severe Absence Definition

Attendance below 50% is classed as severe absence.

When evaluating success, the school will consider whether or not:

- The school's attendance and pupils' punctuality have improved
- Parental response to absence has improved
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of good attendance
- Pupils and parents are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance
- Parents and governors are made aware of the current law on attendance
- Attendance issues have been included in PSHE lessons

Attendance is monitored every three weeks. Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance becomes a concern.

Where a child is at risk of ongoing persistent or severe absence, we will work as closely as possible with the family and any appropriate outside agencies to support removing barriers and improving attendance as quickly as possible. This may include support from our EWO, SEN services, social care and any other providers deemed appropriate based on the needs of the child and family. In the event that these strategies are not deemed successful, we will assess how proactive the family have been before deciding next steps. If it is felt a family has not been supportive of the process we will consider other actions, including the potential for legal action.

Appendix 1

To the Parent/Carer of: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»

Dear «salutation»

Attendance for year to date

Every school has to monitor the percentage attendance of all their pupils. The target set by the Government and Cornwall Council is 96%. «chosen_forename»'s attendance for the year to date is «percentage_attendance»%. There are also authorised absences of «authorised_percentage_attendance»% and unauthorised absences of «unauthorised_percentage_attendance»%.

GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Attendance between 96% - 100% (If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have fewer than 6 days absence in total)	Attendance between 95% - 95.9% (If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have no more than two weeks absence in total)	Attendance between 90% - 94.9% (If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have up to four weeks absence in total)	Attendance between 80% - 89.9% (If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have up to 8 weeks absence in total)
Your child has excellent attendance and has the best possible chance of achieving their full potential.	Your child has good attendance and is likely to be able to achieve the grade of which they are capable.	Your child's attendance needs to improve. These absences make it difficult for your child to achieve their target grades. It is also difficult for children to maintain friendships and stay in touch with work and lessons.	Your child's attendance is a serious concern. Missing so much time makes it very hard for your child to stay in touch with lessons, work and friendships. They will find it almost impossible to learn effectively.
		Attendance of 90% or less is described as persistently absent by the Government.	

If your child's attendance is 96% or above, thank you for everything you do to support them coming into school each and every day. Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically; find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with; and find learning more satisfying.

We recognise that there are lots of reasons why children may not be in school and many of these qualify as an 'authorised absence' but we still have to notify you of the overall figures. If your child's attendance is lower than 96% or falling, please contact your class teacher in the first instance and discuss how school may be able to support you and your child further. If you require further help, myself or Mr Barritt are available to discuss how else we can assist.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnard

Deputy Headteacher and Improving Attendance Lead

(Appendix 2)

KEA COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Request for a child to be absent during term time

(please read the notes on the back of this form before you fill it in,)

Section A:

Child's name:	Class:
First day of absence:	
Last day of absence:	
Total number of days absent from school:	
Why are you requesting taking your child out of school during term time? Please include any information you would like us to consider.	

Section B:

I have read the attached notes. The information I have given on this form is correct:

Signature of parent or carer: _____ Date: _____

Section C: *(for school use only)*

☐ Request not approved for the following reason:

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☐ Request approved due to the following exceptional circumstances:

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Headteacher's signature: _____ Date: _____

KEA COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Notes on applying for a child to be absent during term time

Your legal responsibilities

You have a legal duty to make sure your child attends school regularly and punctually. Schools have a duty to ensure that children attend school. The school and the Local Authority monitor your child's attendance and will take action if it is poor.

If your child is out of school for no valid reason, or on unauthorised absence, we have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may decide to prosecute.

Absence for a family holiday

Family holidays are expected to be taken outside school terms. Cornwall Council publishes the dates of school terms well ahead; this is to help you plan your holidays.

A copy of the term dates for the current and following academic year are available from the school office. When you book your holiday please check that it does not clash with the school term.

Applying for absence

If you have to request an absence during school time, please fill in the form over the page. Please ensure that you give at least 4 weeks' notice of intended absence.

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) were amended in 2013 and under these amended regulations headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Absence during term time is only likely to be authorised for exceptional circumstances such as the marriage or funeral of a close relation of the child.