

Attendance policy

Next to be reviewed: September 2024

(Policy revised to include the additional requirements published by the DfE May 2022 'Working together to improve school attendance')

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Purpose

This is to promote excellent attendance which will contribute to maintaining a positive school ethos and culture so that each pupil achieves their potential.

Why attendance matters

At Kettlethorpe High School we insist on the highest level of attendance from all our pupils so they may develop their full potential during their time at school. It is our aim to maintain a culture of strong academic progress, excellent attendance and punctuality. Missing out on education has a significant effect on pupils' life opportunities. There is a clear link shown in research between attendance and attainment in GCSEs. Irregular attendance can have a significant impact on pupil achievement.

Everyone associated with the school - pupils, parents, carers, all teaching and support staff and external agencies - must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work. We aim to highlight and resolve any difficulties regarding a pupil's attendance as early as possible, using our rigorous monitoring and intervention procedures and pastoral support programmes to help solve any problems. If necessary, the Educational Welfare Officer will be involved in more complex cases.

We believe attendance is a shared responsibility. Parents/carers have a vital role in promoting good attitudes in attendance as evidence shows that pupils who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially. We ask for support from parents/carers to:

- Ensure that their children are present at every opportunity
- Arrive on time
- Avoid allowing children to stay at home unnecessarily
- Avoid taking them out of school without authorisation.

The law on school attendance and a right to full time education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that 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.

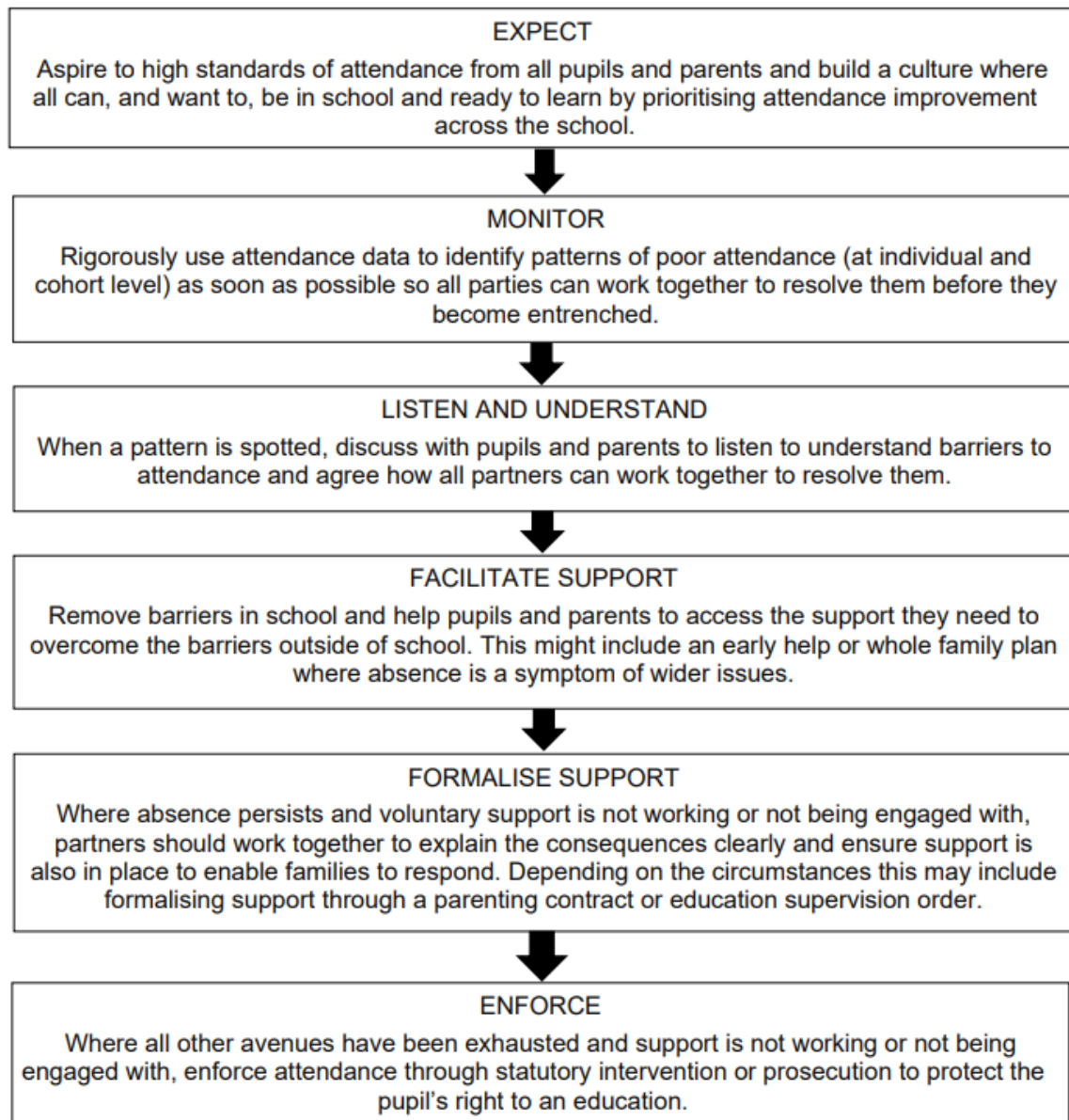
Raise your child's attendance = raise their chances!

The school attendance target of 97% is the minimum that we expect for all pupils. Every lesson counts and it is this commitment to learning that will have a positive impact on attainment and progress.

97-100%	Good to perfection	Students will be praised in school. 100% attendance - parents/carers will receive written notification termly.
91-95%	Cause for concern	Attendance will be monitored. Further absences may not be authorised without medical documentation.
90% and below	Drastic effect on academic achievement	90% or less is persistently absent (PA). You will be invited to a meeting. The Educational Welfare Officer will be notified and in some cases parents/carers can be issued with a Penalty Notice Warning, fines may be initiated.

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance - at home, in school or more broadly - requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Duties and Responsibilities

Deputy Head Teacher and Key Stage Leaders of Achievement

- Oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies as required. This will be achieved by liaison with the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant members of the Pastoral, Inclusion and Learning Support Teams.
- Support the Form Tutors and teaching staff in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), Attendance Team, Year Managers and SENCO as well as Key Stage Leaders to devise any necessary re-integration programmes for pupils who are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long-term absence.
- The lead senior school leader for attendance is Mr G Lickiss and can be contacted via telephone on the main school number 01924 251 605.

Year Managers

- Meet regularly with the Attendance Team and other relevant staff to monitor attendance and punctuality for their year groups (including the monitoring of relevant sub-groups).
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues (e.g. subject truancy).
- Promote good attendance through assemblies
- Offer support and work closely with the parents/carers of pupils who are persistent absentees or at risk of becoming so. The protocol is built around early intervention and communication with parents in order to maximise and maintain good attendance.
- Conduct home visits when there are issues with punctuality and/or school refusal.

Form Tutors

- Encourage all pupils in their form to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Record attendance in planners of each pupil in the tutor group.
- Direct any correspondence from parents/carers with regard to absences to the Attendance Team.

- Keep an overview of pupils' attendance and check patterns of absence and poor punctuality.

Subject Teachers

- Take an electronic register at the start of each lesson.
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons to the Attendance Team as soon as possible.
- Use SIMS to record any issues with punctuality – pass on any concerns to the appropriate person/s.
- Supply the main office with a list of names and teaching staff if taking pupils out of school or for any reason.
- Inform colleagues of any pupils taking part in events in school that require pupils to be off timetable.

School Attendance Team

- Compile all attendance data and information for relevant staff.
- Make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence for all pupils where the reason for absence is unknown. This may involve telephoning/texting/emailing all parents/carers when contact hasn't been made.
- Contact parents/carers should any pupil leave the site without permission.
- Work closely with the Senior Leadership Team, Key Stage Leaders, Year Managers, Form Tutors and EWO to monitor pupils who present concerns.
- Updating parents with regards to attendance achievements.

Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

- Work closely with relevant staff to establish caseload and feedback information on work in progress.
- Liaise with Attendance Team to ensure communication is up to date.
- Attend school attendance meetings organised by the Attendance Team to monitor individual pupils' attendance.
- Organise all panel meetings where necessary.
- Carry out home visits.
- Issue fixed term penalty notices.

Pupil registration

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

Present – the pupil is on the premises at the time of registration.

Approved Educational Activity – the pupil is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example field trip, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

Authorised Absence – an absence authorised by school which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be inappropriate.

Unauthorised Absence – an absence where the pupil does not have good cause to be missing from school. Unauthorised absence can be defined in the following ways:

Truancy – this is action by pupils who fail to attend school when they should, including leaving the school premises after registration.

School refusal – this is chronic non-attendance over a period of time, usually an indicator of wider family, psychological or behavioural problems.

Punctuality

All pupils are expected to arrive on time and be ready and punctual to lessons. This is a minimum expectation. They should arrive for 8.30am and be in registration by 8.40am, ready to start learning. The school bell will sound at 8:35am to indicate pupil movement, another bell will sound at 8.40am. Any pupil arriving after this will receive a concern via Class Charts. Minutes late will be recorded on SIMS by the tutor.



Any pupil arriving after 9.00am must sign in at the Attendance office before going to their lesson. If they have no valid reason for being late, they will receive a 30-minute detention after school the next day. Any pupil arriving after 9.20am will receive a U code on their registration record. Registers are closed by this point. This is an unauthorised absence. If your child continues to be persistently late, you will be contacted by the school via a letter, text message or email. Please be aware, if your child receives more than ten U codes on their registration record, this will result in a fixed penalty notice being issued. If a pupil arrives late and fails to sign in, a 60-minute detention will be given. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office as this may cause a safeguarding issue.

Each week parents will receive a notification (by text) informing them if their child has been late to school on two or more occasions. This message can be replied to via text.

Rewards and Incentives

Attendance is monitored weekly. It is celebrated in form tutor periods, assemblies and award evenings. Our rewards system recognises weekly and half-termly 100% attendance and encourages pupils to monitor their own attendance and punctuality in their pupil planner.

Certificates are issued each year to pupils achieving 100% attendance. End of year trips are held to recognise those pupils whose attendance and behaviour has been excellent. We also thank you for your continued support.

Legal framework

Parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure their child attends school regularly. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”

Illness

If your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible.

- Telephone on 01924 251605 before 9am
- Report an absence via the Edulink app or Edulink website

Please give your child’s name, year group and the reason for the absence. We ask that you contact us **each day** that your child is absent unless you have given an indication of how long the absence will last. The school can ask for medical evidence for any absence of more than a week. Without this evidence, in some circumstances, the absence will not be authorised.

Appointments

We ask that, where possible, you make routine medical and other appointments out of school time so as not to impact on your child’s learning. If this is not possible, we require notification in advance. Please telephone or use the Edulink app to notify us. Please avoid last minute appointments as staff are not always available to collect a pupil from a classroom. All communication with school should be in accordance with the schools communication policy.

In most cases, wherever possible your child must attend school before the appointment and return to school afterwards wherever possible. Pupils should go to the attendance office to

sign out and back in on their return. All these procedures are very important as in the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on the school site at that time.

We need to see the appointment letter/card as evidence to authorise the absence. All day medical appointments will not be authorised without medical evidence.

Other authorised absence

Certain days hold special relevance for various religious communities including Eid for Muslims, Diwali for Hindus, and Passover for Jews. Pre-authorised absence can be given for religious observance. Other genuine reasons for absence – with pre-authorisation – include funerals, interviews and attending sporting events. If a pupil is suspended from school, this absence will be authorised.

Unauthorised absence

Certain types of absence will be marked as unauthorised, for example shopping for uniform, looking after siblings, birthdays or day trips, etc. Absences where the parents have not given the school a reason are also recorded as unauthorised.

If your child arrives at school after the morning registers have closed (9.20am) they may be marked as an unauthorised absence. They will get their afternoon mark if they attend as normal.

If a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences the education welfare officer (EWO) may decide to issue a fixed penalty notice on behalf of the local authority (LA). See page 15.

Persistent absentees

The Department for Education's threshold at which a pupil is defined as 'persistently absent' is missing 10% or more of school across the year for whatever reason. Where a pupil's attendance record reaches a concerning level and is approaching persistently absent, we will contact you to discuss ways in which the school can support you and your child.

Broken weeks

The school analyses 'broken weeks' data to identify how often a pupil has at least one day off a week. Multiple broken weeks can lead to lost learning and gaps in knowledge. If we become concerned about the number of broken weeks or a possible pattern developing, we will contact you to discuss our concerns.

Support

Pupils who are long term absentees for whatever reason, often find the return to school problematical. There are both academic and social difficulties which they may need time to overcome. For some pupils this may involve a personalised re-integration programme devised by the appropriate member of staff. This may include a phased reintegration or use of rooms within the Inclusion Hub, alongside support from the pastoral or behaviour team. Parents/carers will be involved throughout the reintegration process.

Holidays in term time (Leave of absence)

The Government strongly urges parents/carers to avoid taking their children out of school for family holidays as this will disrupt their education. Whilst we understand the difficulties parents/carers may have in organising holidays during the school holidays and the benefits to be had from cheaper term-time holidays, this type of absence is detrimental to a child's education.

There is a common misconception that any child is allowed to take 10 days holiday per year. This is not true. Parents/carers are entitled to request leave of absence from the school. The headteacher has the discretion to allow up to 10 days in any academic year for the purpose of a family holiday only where there are **special circumstances**. Other factors will be taken into account, such as:

- The time of year the child will be absent (no requests will be granted at the start of a new academic year, during exam time or for any pupil in Y10 or Y11);
- The attendance record of the pupil;
- The number of previous requests for family holidays.

Any request should be made well in advance by completing a holiday request form obtained from the attendance office or electronically via the school website

<https://kettlethorpehigh.co.uk/attendance/>

We will consider all requests individually, **although family holidays will only be authorised in the most exceptional circumstances.**

Where a parental request has been refused, and parents/carers continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. This is a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay can result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court. This legislation also applies if no prior application has been made or where a false reason for the absence has been provided.

In order to support parents who wish to book family holidays, school term dates for the current and the next year are published on our website as soon as they are available.

Dual registration

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. The main examples of dual registration are when two institutes have shared responsibility for the pupils. They may be attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis.

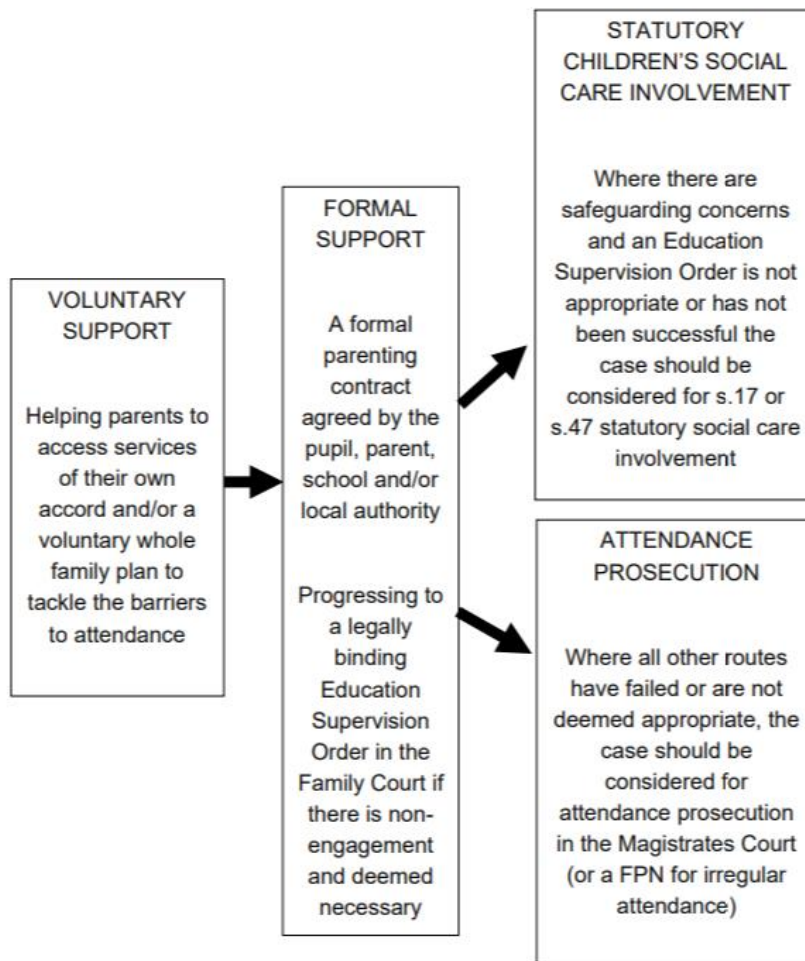
Suspensions (with no alternate provision made)

Suspensions from attending school is counted as an unauthorised absence. Work will be provided to complete at home.

A decision to suspend a pupil will be taken only in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy. Pupils who are suspended should remain at home. If the school has evidence that a pupil has been present in a public place during a suspension period, the parents/carers of the pupils are at risk of receiving a fixed penalty notice.

Attendance legal intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.



Parenting contracts

The Education Act 2004 states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. If your child does not, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Fast Track promotes early intervention to improve school attendance and punctuality. It involves pupil, parents/carers, school and the Local Authority. It sets clear expectations for attendance and punctuality and gives an 8 week period for improvement to be made.

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school (with the exception of independent schools and non-maintained special schools) or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. A contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. A parenting contract is not a punitive tool. It is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents

cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer a contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but a contract should always be explored before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.

One parenting contract may be arranged with all parents, or in circumstances where it is desirable to have different requirements for each parent then separate parenting contracts for each parent should be arranged.

Education supervision orders

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner should also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, local authorities must fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution.

The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

Attendance prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

Penalty notices

The school can make a referral to the Local Authority where parents/carers are failing in their legal duty. The Local Authority has the power to prosecute parents/carers who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If found guilty, parents/carers could be fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for 3 months.

Penalty notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly and fines are £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Fixed penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the suspension the days that the child must not be present in a public place. Please also refer to page 10, Leave of absence.

Parenting orders

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

Useful Links

DfE website links:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Wakefield MDC – school attendance: <http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/schools-and-children/supporting-families/education-welfare-service/school-attendance-matter>