

King Edwin Primary & Nursery School



Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

This policy was reviewed in March 2017 by: Lesley Armitage (School Business Manager)
Dick Empson (Governor)

The policy was approved by the F&GP Committee on 28 March 2017

This policy will be reviewed biennially

Date of next review: Spring Term 2019

INTRODUCTION

At King Edwin Primary School, we believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised. Even short periods of absence can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Nottinghamshire Local Authority is committed to working with, and supporting schools, parents/carers and children to ensure that every child achieves the highest level of attendance at school. The Local Authority is also committed to working in partnership with other agencies who can contribute to an holistic approach to improving school attendance.

Targeted Support will lead on school attendance for the Local Authority and will ensure that all other relevant agencies are engaged in the support of particularly vulnerable children and groups, including children in public care and Traveller children.

Children whose attendance is excellent will have their achievement acknowledged and celebrated.

EXPECTATIONS

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer. Any absences should be explained, verbally or in writing to the teacher concerned with, if possible, the predicted date of return.

At King Edwin Primary School, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. We strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Parents/carers should be aware that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom partaking of the complete lesson sequence. Children can also suffer socially when absent from their peers for any period of time.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents / guardians. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

There is no automatic right to any leave of absence. All schools in the Dukeries Family have adopted a policy of not authorising exceptional leave. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time. Each request is individually assessed by the Head Teacher.

The Education Act 2002 places the responsibility for enforcing school attendance on the Local Authority. This responsibility is delegated to Targeted Support.

Legal action will be instigated against parents/carers in relevant circumstances using the wide range of available options including:

- Penalty notices
- School attendance orders
- Section 444 (1) and (1) (a) of the Education Act 2002.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Although the law distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absence, it is the overall attendance of pupils that is crucial. At King Edwin Primary School our current attendance target for children of compulsory school age is 96%. This target is reviewed on an annual basis. The Local Authority also has a target to reduce absence that will be monitored annually.

King Edwin Primary School, like all other schools, has a legal duty to publish figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. School staff are committed to working with parents in order to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. This document records whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory age is absent, every session of absence must be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not the parents/carers. It is, therefore, essential that information about the cause of each absence is required, preferably in writing.

Where no notification has been received by 9:30am a call will be made by a member of school office staff to ascertain the whereabouts of the missing child/children. If there is doubt about the whereabouts of any child/ children it may be deemed necessary to make home visits or to call the Police.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. In these situations, school will work closely with the family to nurture a better pattern of attendance. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may perpetuate the situation. Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.

For further information about the monitoring of attendance at King Edwin Primary School, please refer to the Attendance Concern Flowchart in Appendix 4 and the samples of letters which are distributed to parents/carers in Appendices 1-3.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

When the child returns to school, the parent or carer must explain the absence to a member of staff.

Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, the parent or carer should notify the school prior to the day of absence.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Authorised absence refers to mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or another unavoidable cause. Registers are marked with a relevant code to distinguish between the different reasons for non-attendance.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or carer.

The following will not be authorised:

- Parents keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained (documented evidence will be needed in the case of persistent illness)
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carers or have general concerns about the absence. This referral is made to Targeted Support.

An absence may be classified as unauthorised if there has been a consistent period of absence with the same verbal reason but no additional evidence provided or where a senior member of staff has reason to believe that the reason for absence given is inaccurate.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised.

Where the parents keep the child away for longer than agreed then the extra time is also marked unauthorised.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

Exceptional leave during the school day

Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Children must not be taken out of school without a previously written agreement (unless in an emergency). Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.

On return to school during the day parents must inform the school office staff so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

Parents should inform the school office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

When a child is required to attend a hospital appointment during school hours this will not be counted as an absence for the school's internal attendance reward procedures.

Exceptional leave during term time

We follow Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for leave during term time, which is not to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Exceptional Leave of Absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

Requests for exceptional leave

- Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements. The request must be made on an Exceptional Leave of Absence Form which can be obtained from the school office.
- Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.
- Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Headteacher. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer / transition process.

MISSING CHILDREN

If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

LONG-TERM ABSENCE THROUGH CHILD'S ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS

If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Letter 1

Appendix 2: Pattern letter

Appendix 3: Letter 2

Appendix 4: Persistent late

Appendix 5: Leave of absence

Appendix 6: Flowchart

Appendix 1

King Edwin Primary School

Acting Head Teacher: Miss Lindey Marsh
Fourth Avenue, Edwinstowe, Notts, NG21 9NS
Tel: (01623) 822111 Fax: (01623) 825707
E Mail: office@kingedwin.notts.sch.uk
Website: www.kingedwin.notts.sch.uk



Dear Parent / Carer of
.....Class.....

Attendance matters

At King Edwin Primary School we are passionate about every child achieving their full potential. As it has been proven that attainment can be closely linked to attendance each child's attendance target is set at **96%**. For this reason we feel it is important to highlight that your child's current attendance is% so far this academic year.

We understand that some absences are avoidable, however, as this may impact upon your child's progress, we hope that you will support us in keeping any future absences to a minimum in order that your child's overall attendance improves over the coming months.

We will monitor your child's attendance for the next 6 weeks.

Should you wish to discuss your child's attendance with a member of staff please request a meeting with myself or your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Miss L Marsh
Acting Headteacher

Appendix 2

King Edwin Primary School



Acting Head Teacher: Miss Lindey Marsh
Fourth Avenue, Edwinstowe, Notts, NG21 9NS
Tel: (01623) 822111 Fax: (01623) 825707
E Mail: office@kingedwin.notts.sch.uk
Website: www.kingedwin.notts.sch.uk

Date

Dear Parents of XXX

At King Edwin Primary School we are passionate about every child achieving their full potential. As it has been proven that attainment can be closely linked to attendance each child's attendance target is set at **96%**. For this reason we feel it is important to highlight that your child's current attendance is% so far this academic year. We have noticed that there appears to be a pattern in your child's absence. This may impact upon your child's progress, we hope that you will support us in keeping any future absences to a minimum in order that your child's overall attendance improves over the coming months.

We will monitor your child's attendance for the next 6 weeks.

Should you wish to discuss your child's attendance with a member of staff please request a meeting with myself or your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Miss L Marsh
Acting Headteacher

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Date

Address block

Dear (Parent's Name).....

Re...(Child's Name).....

Your child's level of attendance currently stands at NN% which is well below the national average of 95%.

Following the letter dated NNNNNN (child's name) has been monitored; however it still remains at an unacceptable level.

In order to support you in raising your child's attendance I would like to invite you to a meeting with myself to discuss this further. Please contact school to arrange this within seven days of receipt of this letter.

It is vital that we work together in order to improve attendance. Poor attendance means that your child will not meet the expected progress.

Yours sincerely

Miss L Marsh
Acting Headteacher

Appendix 4

King Edwin Primary School



Acting Head Teacher: Miss Lindey Marsh
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Website: www.kingedwin.notts.sch.uk

DATE

Dear Parent / Carer of _____

Persistent Lateness

I am writing to inform you that your child is persistently late for school. Between date and date he/she was late on number occasions and, therefore, missed number hours of education. School records indicate that of these number have been recorded as unauthorised because they arrived after the register was closed at 9:10am.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5-16 years old) must receive a suitable full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly.

At King Edwin Primary School we are passionate about every child reaching their full potential. As it has been proven that attainment can be closely linked to attendance each child's attendance target is set at **96%**. As a direct result of the persistent lateness your child's current attendance is% so far this academic year.

When pupils arrive late they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

While we understand that occasional lateness may be unavoidable this level of lateness cannot continue. It is essential that we meet to discuss your child's attendance in order to support you with this matter.

Please contact the school office on 822111 within the next 3 working days to make an appointment to see Miss Marsh (Acting Headteacher).

Yours sincerely

Miss L Marsh
Acting Headteacher

Appendix 5

King Edwin Primary School



Acting Head Teacher: Miss Lindey Marsh
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APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name (s)

Class(es)

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of first day of absence.....

Date of Return to School

Total number of school days missed

Reasons for absence from school:

.....
.....

Do you expect to take any more term time holidays this academic year? No Yes

Please give details

.....

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application

Signed

Date

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Before completing the application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school to take part in a family holiday, please read these notes carefully:

- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. The Local Education Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.
- If you wish to take your child on holiday during term time, you must apply for permission in writing using the attached form. Permission for authorised leave of absence may be granted for holidays totalling no more than two weeks in any school year, unless there are very exceptional circumstances.
- There are certain times of the year when a child may experience problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence and give permission for a holiday in term time, the school will take these and other factors into account.
- If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed holiday as possible.

Issued by Nottinghamshire Education Welfare Service

Appendix 6

King Edwin Primary and Nursery School Attendance Concern Flowchart

If attendance drops below 93%

