

# Killigrew Primary & Nursery School

## Attendance Policy



Reviewed: November 2022

## **Vision**

At Killigrew, we aim for excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where our pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

## **Aims**

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.
- To keep whole school attendance above 96%.

## **Role of the Governing Body**

- Ensure an effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.
- Offer a clear vision for high attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
- Have a clear, written school attendance policy.
- Regularly review and understand attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders to focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it the most.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognise attendance as a key area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- Have a designated attendance champion in the SLT with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- Ensure staff receive training and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.

## **Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Having a clear, written school attendance policy and ensuring the implementation of the policy-ensuring compliance with DfE guidance.
- Ensuring all staff know and understand their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance-ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education
- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and SEND. Ensuring compliance with statutory guidance.
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.
- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.

- Reporting attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets to the Governing Body.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders to secure their trust and engagement.
- Ensuring there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, LA's and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. We will consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

#### Ensuring all staff members:

- treat pupils with dignity
- build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
- understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
- communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
- deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through the website and admission/transition events
- use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality
- Monitoring implementation of policy and practice e.g., through drop ins and 'late gate.'
- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of groups and the impact of interventions
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME
- Engaging pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions

#### **Role of the Parent Liaison Officer**

The School Parent Liaison Officer is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance.
- Ensuring practice in place to address persistent and severe absence is robust.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Oversight of data analysis
  - to allow early intervention to address issues including raising concerns with other agencies e.g. children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
  - Robust school systems which provide data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
    - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
    - young carers
    - children who are eligible for free school meals
    - children who speak English as a second language
    - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
- Keeping the Head informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures, compiling attendance data for the Head, Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO).

- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the LAO is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners and make the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by parents/carers and implemented consistently

## **Role of Teaching Staff**

Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring registers are taken at the start of the morning and afternoon session and are accurate and up to date. (Pupils should be called by name and respond formally e.g. 'Good morning')
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
  - treat pupils with dignity
  - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively
  - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
  - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

They should:

- Reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Promote the next lesson and sequence of lessons to motivate pupils to be in school
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress
- Follow up on absence/lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons
- Contact parents/carers regarding absence and punctuality
- Review class attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils

### **Pupils at risk of severe or persistent absence**

Welcome pupils back following an absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:

- lesson resources
- buddy support
- 1:1 input
- meeting to discuss absence, patterns and barriers
- establishing action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets e.g.
- lunchtime arrangements
- support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing
- lead daily/weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
- making regular contact with parents/carers to discuss progress
- considering what support for re-engagement might be needed
- preparing supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return
- developing targeted intervention to address gaps and build confidence
- contributing to action plans where appropriate
- providing praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time

### **Admin Team**

- To ensure the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate.
- To ensure robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- To track and follow up absence and poor punctuality.
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice.
- Conduct robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including those with a social worker. If absence continues, contact will be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identify unexplained absences and contact parents to understand why/when the pupil will return.
- Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance register the correct code will be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than five working days after the session.
- Where possible, ensure the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Implement children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate.
- Engage with schools to access absence information prior to transfer.

### **Expectations of parents**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school every day school is open.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.00am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support. If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school

- calling staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as circumstances which may affect absence or require support
- booking any medical appointments outside the school day where possible.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.

Absence from school may be authorised for the following reasons:

Sickness

Days of religious observance

Exceptional family circumstances e.g. close family bereavement/funeral

Emergency medical/dental appointments (though these should be made outside school hours whenever possible)

The school will not authorise absence for:

Holidays

Shopping

Looking after siblings or parents who are unwell

Birthdays

Funeral of distant relative involving more than one day of absence

Pet going to the vet/pet's death

Car breaking down

### **Working with the Local Authority**

- We work in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Headteacher or Attendance Champion meets with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO.
- If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.
- Statutory intervention can include:
  - Parenting Contract
  - Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
  - Parenting Order
  - Education Supervision Order
  - Prosecution

### **Encouraging Good Attendance**

The school encourages good attendance by:

- Using clear, consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance/address absences. Makes sure these systems are inclusive/appropriate for all pupils.
- Publicising good attendance e.g., assemblies, newsletters, termly report to the Governing Body.
- Awarding attendance certificates to pupils for over 96% attendance each term.
- Offering other school incentives to celebrate good attendance including prizes
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record

### **Punctuality**

Classroom doors open for a soft start at 8:40am (juniors) 8:45am (infants) 9:00am (nursery) and school begins at the following times:

8:50am (juniors) 8:55am (infants) 9:00am (nursery)

Pupils should not arrive at school before 8.40am (juniors) 8.45am (infants)

- The register will be open for no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins. Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9:20am (juniors) 9:25am (infants) 9:30am (nursery) and a

parent/carer provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.

- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.
- School may arrange a meeting with parents to discuss concerns so that the problem can be addressed.

### **Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence**

School is expected to:

- proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in multi-agency efforts with the LA/other partners.
- Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. (Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.)

### **Pupils who are persistently absent**

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue. School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working/ engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.

### **Pupils who are severely absent**

Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%. School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Agree a joint approach for all pupils who are severely absent with the Local Authority.

### **Absence**

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation in relation to a particular absence does not oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

- Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Our school follows HCC's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.

- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (1/2 day=1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.