

KEW WOODS PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Revised September 2015

Rationale

Kew Woods Primary School recognises that high attendance and punctuality rates from its pupils are not only a legal requirement but also of paramount importance for continuity and progression in learning. We believe that all pupils benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may affect full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible.

Kew Woods Primary School aims to work with parents to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time. Helping to promote a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: parents, pupils and all members of school staff. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital they attend regularly and on time every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Attendance and punctuality rates at Kew Woods Primary School are accurately monitored and strategies implemented to stimulate them. It is very important therefore that parents ensure that their child attends school regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Purposes of an Attendance and Punctuality Policy

- To accurately monitor the attendance and punctuality rates of pupils.
- To improve pupil attendance and punctuality rates.
- To identify pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality rates are below expectations (95%) and implement strategies to bring about their improvement.
- To encourage pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality rates.

Principles

- Pupils should recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- The promotion of good attendance and punctuality rates is the responsibility of all staff and strategies to bring about improvement must be consistently applied.
- The legal requirements for recording and reporting attendance must be met.
- The support of parents must be sought, with young pupils it is often the parent at fault, not the child.

Promoting Regular Attendance

To help create a pattern of regular, punctual attendance we take the following steps:

1. Whole school attendance rates will be included each week on the school website via the newsletter.
2. Certificates will be awarded to pupils achieving 100% attendance each term and over a whole school year.
3. Pupils in Year 6 who have had 100% attendance during their time at school are presented with a trophy or prize at prize giving assembly.

4. The class who obtains the highest attendance rate each week are presented with a certificate in Celebration Assembly and are acknowledge. This is proudly displayed in the classroom.
5. At the end of the academic year, the class with the highest attendance receives a 'treat afternoon'.

Absence from School

The school will:-

- Record and monitor attendance in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Teachers mark the register at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions
- Registers open at 8.45 and pupils are deemed late after 8.55am, then deemed absent after register closes 9.30am
- Check the registers weekly to monitor lateness and absence
- School will text home on first day of absence if school has not heard from parents/carers.
- Monitor the Exceptional Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Set targets for reducing absence.
- Write to parents when attendance goes under 95%. No further absence will be authorised.
- Refer pupils for a penalty notice if a minimum of ten school sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in the current term and / or eighteen sessions lost to authorised absence over two consecutive terms.
- No longer authorise holidays except in exceptional circumstances. Any holidays taken will be marked unauthorised and referrals made for penalty notices.
- 2 penalty notices applications can be made in one academic year

Since 1st September 2013 Head Teachers have not been allowed to grant leave of absence to children during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers wishing to take leave of absence will need to provide the appropriate evidence outlining the exceptional circumstances for the headteacher's consideration. If you do take your child out of school without permission, the absences will not be authorised and Sefton Attendance and Welfare Managers may issue a penalty notice to each parent of £60 for each child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid the Attendance and Welfare Service may then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child is in class by 8.55am each day.
- Ensure that their child is collected or goes home alone promptly at the end of school.

- Contact school early on the first morning by 8.30am of absence by phone, email or in person.
- Arrange dental, doctor or hospital appointments outside the school day whenever possible.
- Only ask for leave of absence for their child in exceptional circumstances,
- All leave will be requested in writing via the headteacher
- Not take their children out of school during term time, and realize that if they do they are at risk of damaging their child's education and risking a penalty notice by Sefton Council .
- Inform school of any absence and provide any supporting evidence.

If parents/carers do not ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time the school will:

- Contact parents/carers to discuss the reasons and plan for improvement.
- Monitor the attendance plan and celebrate the improvements. If parents/carers persist in not ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time the school will unauthorise the absence.
- Refer their child if they have 10% or more unauthorised absence to the Attendance and Welfare Service Education Welfare Office to be considered for legal proceedings / penalty notice.

The Role of the Governing Body

- The governing body must ensure that school registers are kept; one for admissions and one for attendance.
- The governing body is required to agree the annual attendance target for the school (96%)

Understanding types of absence:

Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which are unavoidable, sporting events, music exams and these are coded accordingly.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes: -

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily,
- Truancy,
- Absences which have never been properly explained,
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark,
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays,
- Leave of absence which has not been agreed.

Any child who is reluctant to attend school is supported by the school and parents/carers to address the reasons and to aid a swift return to school.

Persistent Absentees (PA): a child goes onto this list if they have missed 10% or more schooling across the year (19 days) for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing harm to your child's educational prospects and therefore support from parents is needed to tackle this. All children on the PA list are contacted and a meeting is set up with the Head teacher to discuss the attendance plan and create a successful strategy. All PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

Lateness

Our doors open at 8.45am for basic skills sessions and we would encourage our pupils to be in school at this time. The register is taken at 8.55 a.m. Any child arriving later than 8.55 a.m. should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then be sent to their classroom.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken.

What can parents do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away.
- Send a note when your child returns to school.
- Try to make appointments outside school time.
- Send in copies of medical information, appointments etc to evidence reasons for absence.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.
- Ensure the school holds up to date contact information for parents, including a telephone number, to ensure ease with lines of communication.

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and staff at the school.
- Avoid taking holidays in term time.
- Start good habits for attending school at an early age.

