



**KINGSE  
SCHOOL**

## **Attendance Policy**

## Introduction

Good school attendance is imperative when securing good outcomes which in turn improve life choices and options. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parent's responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents & carers, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all focus on this Kingsdown will:

- Report to parents/carers at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good and improved attendance through achievement points award assemblies, reward trips and Kingsdown beats badges.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates, outings/events and Achievement Points.
- Train all staff so they understand the importance of promoting good attendance, are able to have constructive attendance conversations with students and parents.
- Tutors have a responsibility to monitor and intervene with poor attendance and reward good and improving attendance. They will have weekly attendance conversations with students who will record their weekly attendance in their planners.

### Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

*Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.*

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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- 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
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your 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 usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this as soon as possible.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA students and their parents are subject to an Action Plan. All PA cases are also automatically managed by the Attendance Officer.

### **Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent from school parents/carers must:

- Contact Kingsdown School as soon as possible on the first day of absence using the automated service;
- Send a note in on the first day they return or put a note in the Homework Diary/Student Organiser with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If children are absent we will:

- Telephone, text you or email on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Year Leader or member of Senior Leadership Team;
- Refer the matter to the Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 94%.

## **Telephone Numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have correct contact numbers at all times – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. This can be viewed from the details page via the SIMS Learning Gateway.

## **Kingsdown School Attendance Officer**

Kingsdown School employs an Attendance Officer. Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If attempts to improve the child's attendance have failed and absences persist, this Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or, with the support of Swindon Education Welfare Services, recommend prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Our attendance officer will also engage with families to provide support to improve attendance. This can include working with external agencies as well as engaging with the SENCO or one of our onsite hubs or 'Platform' provision. The aim of this intervention is to help students engage with school and increase their attendance.

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If children miss the start of the day they can miss work or vital pieces of information. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons which can be embarrassing and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 8.40am and we expect students to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 8.45am and students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if students arrive after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents/carers could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If students have a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the pastoral team to resolve the problem but parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they are having difficulties with getting students to school on time. If students are persistently late or attendance drops to an unsatisfactory level, sanctions will be applied and parents/carers will be involved to encourage improvements. Please refer to the student handbook for further details.

## **Holidays in Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect childrens' schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help by not taking children away in school time.

The Government actively discourages holidays during term time and there is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the Headteacher.

In making a decision the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school via the website, but it is important that parents/carers understand the circumstances when leave in term time will not be agreed:

- Leave in term time will NOT be authorised where a student's attendance rate is already below 95% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave unless there are exceptional circumstances. (Cases for exceptional circumstances must be made in writing to the Headteacher who will make the final decision).
- There will also be 'zero tolerance periods' for authorisation during assessment periods, GCSE or any other public examinations; when a student has just enrolled.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Persistent absence or any illness not deemed after investigation to be genuine may not be authorised without medical evidence.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Signed by:   
Emma Leigh-Bennett

Signed by:   
Lynne Scragg

Date : 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Date : 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020