

# KEA SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



**Approved by:** Full Governors **Date:** 05.10.20

**Last reviewed on:** September 2020

**Next review due by:** Summer Term 2023

This policy reflects the DfE guidance which state:

**‘Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.’**

Kea School is committed to providing a full and enjoyable educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is vital. As a school we do all that we can to ensure good attendance for all pupils. Any issues that prevent full attendance will be addressed as quickly as possible. Support will be offered to families in order to help improve attendance.

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement and attendance. Regular attendance is critical for a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

The school will regularly remind parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Termly percentage attendance letters are sent out to parents/carers (appendix 1). We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and we will try to establish strong home-school links with families.

### **Objectives**

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and follow up non attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives

The following will be taken into account when dealing with attendance and punctuality:

- pupils arriving after their designated start time will be marked as late.
- guidance given to staff for the accurate completion of registers.
- the importance of punctuality and the response to lateness.
- attendance below 94% will be monitored and all attendance below 90% will be followed up and will be referred to the Education Welfare Office where required.
- daily contact between parents and the school when a child is absent
- in line with Public Health England guidelines, a period of 48 hours absence is required for any pupil with vomiting or diarrhoea. Such absence is authorised.
- in line with Public Health England specific quarantine/absence periods are required for a number of other illnesses including chicken pox and measles.
- most up to date government guidance will be taken for any symptoms of COVID-19.
- clear guidance to parents that headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.
- parents/carers will be contacted when their child’s attendance falls below 90%.
- attendance information and statistics will be included in the school newsletter.
- the headteacher reports on attendance at termly governor meetings.

## **Good Attendance**

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics prove a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement.
- Pupils who regularly attend school make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Pupils who regularly attend school find routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Learning is more satisfying for pupils who attend school regularly.
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

Pupils are happier, healthier and achieve more in school if they attend school regularly.

Parents/carers are asked to help support their child's learning by:

- Ringing or emailing the school on the first morning of absence with the reason and estimated return date.
- Arrange where possible routine medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Keep the school updated if their child's illness extends longer than originally anticipated.
- Ensure that family holidays are not taken during term time.

## **School Roles and Responsibilities**

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone and monitor absence until pupil returns to school.
- Highlight the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters and Home-School Agreement.
- Publish attendance information and statistics in the school newsletter
- Send home termly attendance letters to inform parents/carers if their child's attendance is becoming a concern (appendix 1).
- Registers taken at morning and afternoon sessions.
- The Headteacher and Governing Body monitor attendance patterns and trends.
- The Headteacher is responsible for authorising leave of absence requests for exceptional circumstances during the term time.

## **Good Practice**

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Maintaining accurate attendance records
- Having a consistent approach to marking registers
- Analysing attendance data regularly
- Promptly following up non attendance.
- Inviting parents/carers of children with low attendance to attendance clinics with the Headteacher
- Awarding certificates to pupils with good attendance.

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school.

**Unauthorised absence is damaging to a pupil's education and reflects badly on the school. It also gives children the wrong message about the importance of education**

**which may lead to problems later in schooling. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later in life.**

### **Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'Authorised absences'. For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance, music exams. On such occasions parents/carers must complete a leave of absence form (appendix 2). Parents are not required to complete this form for illness.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when pupils are absent for a specific reason that are **not** permitted by law. These are referred to as 'Unauthorised Absences'. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Parents being ill
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it's the child's or a relative's birthday
- Unapproved holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

The school will contact parents/carers when pupils are absent for unauthorised reasons. The LA may consider taking legal action against those parents/carers.

### **Leave of Absence During Term Time (Exceptional Circumstances)**

The school is not allowed to authorise holidays during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The headteacher will consider the following before deciding to grant leave of absence:

- The impact on the student's academic progress
- The pupil's attendance
- If the absence falls within statutory tests

### **Examples of exceptional circumstances:**

- Company policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time – proof would be needed.
- Service personnel returning from deployment
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a child or parent's recovery from a medical or emotional issue – evidence must be provided.
- Funeral of close relative or family friend
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence
- Out of school activities such as music, arts or sport that operate at a high standard of achievement that are agreed by the LA.
- Time off for children taking part in outside entertainment performances
- Religious observance
- Weddings of parents and siblings or close family that cannot be arranged at weekends or school holidays due to other factors

### **Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional**

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, except where that person is seriously ill.
- Availability of cheaper holidays

### **Legal Note**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance of their child at school.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important to set realistic targets for attendance monitoring purposes.

#### **School Target**

Our school target for attendance is set at 96%

#### **Persistent Absence Definition**

Attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:

- The school's attendance and pupils' punctuality have improved.
- Parental response to absence has improved.
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of good attendance
- Pupils and parents are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance.
- Parents and governors are made aware of the current law on attendance.
- Attendance issues have been included in PSHE lessons.

Attendance is monitored half termly. Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance becomes a concern.

Appendix 1

To the Parent/Carer of: (insert name)

Date

Dear (insert name)

**Attendance (insert term)**

Every term the school monitors the percentage attendance of all our pupils. The target set by the Government and the County Council is 95%.

(insert name) attendance for the (insert term) was (insert figure)%. Your child's overall attendance for this academic year is (insert figure)%.

GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	RED
<p>Attendance between 97% - 100%</p> <p>Up to 2 days absence</p> <p><b>(If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have fewer than 6 days absence in total)</b></p>	<p>Attendance between 95% - 97%</p> <p>Up to 3 days absence</p> <p><b>(If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have up to two weeks absence in total)</b></p>	<p>Attendance between 90% - 95%</p> <p>Up to 1½ weeks absence</p> <p><b>(If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have over four weeks absence in total)</b></p>	<p>Attendance between 80% - 90%</p> <p>Up to 2 weeks absence</p> <p><b>(If this level of attendance continues for the whole school year, your child will have up to 8 weeks absence in total)</b></p>
<p>Your child has excellent attendance and has the best possible chance of achieving their full potential.</p>	<p>Your child has good attendance and is likely to be able to achieve the grade they are capable of.</p>	<p><b>Your child's attendance needs to improve.</b></p> <p>These absences make it difficult for your child to achieve their target grades. It is also difficult for children to maintain friendships and stay in touch with work and lessons.</p>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is a serious concern.</b></p> <p>Missing so much time makes it very hard for your child to stay in touch with lessons, work and friendships. They will find it almost impossible to learn effectively.</p> <p><b>Attendance of 85% or less is described as persistently absent by the Government</b></p>

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Hunkin  
Headteacher

(Appendix 2)

## KEA COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



### Request for a child to be absent during term time

*(please read the notes on the back of this form before you fill it in,)*

#### Section A:

Child's name:	Class:
First day of absence:	
Last day of absence:	
Total number of days absent from school:	
Why are you requesting taking your child out of school during term time? Please include any information you would like us to consider.	

#### Section B:

I have read the attached notes. The information I have given on this form is correct:

Signature of parent or carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section C: *(for school use only)*

Request not approved for the following reason:

--

Request approved due to the following exceptional circumstances:

--

Headteacher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# KEA COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Notes on applying for a child to be absent during term time

### Your legal responsibilities

You have a legal duty to make sure your child attends school regularly and punctually. Schools have a duty to ensure that children attend school. The school and the Local Authority monitor your child's attendance and will take action if it is poor.

If your child is out of school for no valid reason, or on unauthorised absence, we have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may decide to prosecute.

### Absence for a family holiday

Family holidays are expected to be taken outside school terms. Cornwall Council publishes the dates of school terms well ahead; this is to help you plan your holidays.

A copy of the term dates for the current and following academic year are available from the school office. When you book your holiday please check that it does not clash with the school term.

## Applying for absence

If you have to request an absence during school time, please fill in the form over the page. Please ensure that you give at least 4 weeks' notice of intended absence.

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) were amended in 2013 and under these amended regulations headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Absence during term time is only likely to be authorised for exceptional circumstances such as the marriage or funeral of a close relation of the child.