



Let your light shine before others - Matthew 5: 14 - 16

KIRK FENTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

March 2021

Review Date: Spring 2024

Our Vision

Rooted in Christian belief, our vision for every member of this school community is to feel valued and respected, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, faith, belief or ability. Through developing a love of learning, each individual will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and aspire to become the person they were born to be.

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

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Statement of intent

Kirk Fenton CE Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal Framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School Attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children Missing in Education'
- DfE (2020) 'Improving School Attendance'

1.2 This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Local Governing Board (LGB) has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of this policy and procedures at Kirk Fenton CE Primary School
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2020) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

2.2 The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.

2.3 Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for

- Following this policy and ensuring that pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

2.4 Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.

2.5 Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

2.6 The school will ensure that absence procedures are understood by pupils, parents and carers.

2.7 Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

3. Definitions

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **'Absence'** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.

- An **'authorised absence'** as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.

- An **'unauthorised absence'** as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without a reason.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have not been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been previously agreed.
 - Leaving school without a reason during the school day.

- **'Persistent absenteeism'** as:
 - Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

4. Staff Training

4.1 The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

4.2 Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.

4.3 Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupils at risk of persistent absence

5.1 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letter to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Working directly with parents.

5.2 The Local Governing Board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

5.3 Pupils potentially at greater risk of harm who need a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences.

5.4 Teaching staff will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with parents to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide any additional support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement may be needed, especially for vulnerable pupils.

6. Absence Procedures

6.1 Parents will contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.

6.2 Parents will contact school on the first day that their child is absent from school with an explanation of why they are absent; where it is a planned absence, the parent must complete a 'Request for Absence' form in advance.

6.3 A phone call will be made to the parent of any pupil where they have not reported the absence on the first day that they are absent from school.

6.4 In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for the Headteacher to contact the parents and a referral may be made to the attendance officer at the LA.

6.5 The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

6.6 If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with parents.

6.7 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Parental Involvement

7.1 The school will build respectful relationships with the parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.

7.2 The school will communicate openly and honestly with pupils and their families about their expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

7.3 The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. if a pupil has a social worker.

7.4 Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Contact staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

8. Attendance Registers

8.1 The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

8.2 The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registers closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Duel registered - at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

8.3 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

8.4 All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

8.5 Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

8.6 An agreed member of SLT will complete the 'Educational setting attendance form' on a daily basis, based on the information on the attendance register.

9. Attendance Officer

9.1 If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

9.2 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

9.3 The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence.

9.4 The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

10. Lateness

10.1 Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated

10.2 The school day starts at 8:50am. Pupils should be in their classroom by this time and ready to start.

10.3 Registers are marked by 9:10am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.4 Registers close at 9:15am. Pupils will receive an absent mark if they are not in class before this time.

10.5 After lunch, registers are marked at 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.6 The register closes at 1:20pm. Pupils will receive an absent mark if they are not present.

10.7 Pupils attending after 9:15am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

11. Term-Time Leave

Please refer to the Starmat Holidays in Term-Time Policy

12. Truancy

12.1 Truancy means any absence of part, or all of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

12.2 All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

12.3 All pupils are expected to be in their classrooms by 8:50am and 1:15pm, where the teacher will record attendance electronically.

12.4 Immediate action will be taken when there are concerns that a child might be truanting.

12.5 If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

12.6 The following procedures will be taken in the event of truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

13. Missing Children

13.1 Pupils are not permitted to leave the site during the school day unless they have permission from the headteacher.

13.2 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parent of the pupil will be notified.
- If the parents have not had any contact from the pupil, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

13.3 If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

13.4 When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

13.5 The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

13.6 Parents and other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

13.7 The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

13.8 Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

13.9 A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

14. Religious Observances

14.1 The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.

14.2 Parents will inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

15. Appointments

15.1 As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

15.2 Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school office.

15.3 If the appointment requires the pupil to leave school during the school day, they must be signed out by an adult.

15.4 Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16. Modelling, sport and acting performances/ activities

16.1 Under section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/ activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence.

16.2 Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/ performance will request the correct licence from the LA.

16.3 The organiser will allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request - the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.

16.4 The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:

- The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
- The conditions of the licence will be observed

16.5 The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/ activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.

16.6 The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that they are suitable for the pupil.

16.7 The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours a day that the pupil would be required to attend a school in the LA issuing the licence.

16.8 The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours per week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than 3 hours per day; and
- On days where a pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school within the LA
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

16.9 Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/ activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.

16.10 Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is required from the school.

16.11 Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise a leave of absence for each day.

16.12 The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 95%.

16.13 Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

16.14 The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.

16.15 The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity - this can include maximum hours and breaks.

16.16 The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six - this applies to performances only.

16.17 Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.

16.18 A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.

16.19 The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:

- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
- Where performances or activities are taking place; or
- Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.

16.20 The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licenses at any time.

16.21 If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/ organisation applying for the licence.

16.22 The organiser of the performance/ activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

17. Young Carers

17.1 The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

17.2 The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time in school.

17.3 The school will take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be supported on a case by case basis, involving other agencies where appropriate.

18. Monitoring and Review

18.1 The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

18.2 Kirk Fenton's attendance target is 96%.

18.3 Details of our absence levels are reported termly to governors and can be found on our website.

18.4 This policy is reviewed every three years and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

