

Kennel Lane School

Attendance Policy



This School's Attendance Policy is set in consideration and consequence of the provisions of the following;

- *The Education Act 1996*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*
- *The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*
- *Department For Education Guidance as from time to time issued in respect of school attendance matters*

INTRODUCTION

All young people of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. The Education Act of 1996 states that a parent is responsible for ensuring their young person attends regularly and punctually. Regular school attendance is essential if a young person is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

The Court has determined that “Regular” attendance means that which is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school” (*Isle of Wight Council -v- Platt* (6th April 2017) [Supreme Court] [2017] UKSC 28 (on appeal from [2016] EWHC 1283 (Admin)).

Kennel Lane School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its learners. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the young person's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their young person receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the schools attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your young person's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

Learners are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a learner's absence from school after a parent's request.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their young person is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your young person's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your young person off school with minor ailment such as headache or cold is not acceptable. Repeated absence will require us to request that you obtain evidence from your doctor's surgery, such as a stamped appointment card or a prescription. Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for this information and will not be liable for the cost.

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, School with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

School Practice

In line with the Government and Local Authority guidelines

- Registers are taken twice daily. In the morning and in the afternoon.
- Parents, guardians or carers should always telephone the school office before 9.30am if their young person will not be attending school.
- If the school has not been notified of a learner's absence by 9.30am or has been given no prior notification of a learner's absence a phone call home will be made by a member of the school's admin team to ascertain a reason.
- If your young person is likely to be absent for more than one day, we would expect you to contact us each day they are absent and again to advise us when you expect them to return to school.
- A written explanation must always be given when the learner returns to school.
- Staff will bring to the attention of the Head Teacher//Primary Leader/Secondary Leader/ Assistant Head for Behaviour and Attendance or as appropriate of those learners who are seen to be developing a pattern of absence.
- The Head Teacher//Primary Leader/Secondary Leader / Assistant Head for Behaviour and Attendance or as appropriate will write to the parents, guardians or carers of those learners whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Parents, guardians or carers may be asked to meet with the Head Teacher/Primary Leader /Secondary Leader / Assistant Head Behaviour and Attendance or as appropriate to discuss absences.
- Should absences persist with no improvement then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Lateness

Learners learn best when they arrive punctually at school. The school day begins at 8.50 am and all learners are expected to be in school at the time. Registers are open at 8.50 am and close at 9.10 am. A learner will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in the classroom before 9.10 am when the registers are taken.

Any learners arriving late should enter the building through the main reception and report to the school office. Their name will be entered in the register as being late with the reason. A member of the office staff will then radio class staff to collect the learner or send/take the learner to their classroom. Parents are not permitted to take their young person to the classroom as this disrupts teaching. If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed (after 9.10 am), the learner will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the learner is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.

If a learner is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Learners who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other learners.

Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of learners who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Head Teacher/ /Primary Manager/Secondary Manager or as appropriate.

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

Absences during term time

At Kennel Lane School we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure that your young person achieves to their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement.

However, we recognise that there may be occasions where a parent considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. As outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Head Teacher will decide if the circumstances are "exceptional" and thus whether or not the absence will be "authorised".

Parent Action

- Parents must request leave as far in advance as possible, giving at least 2 weeks notice
- Applications to be made in writing on the schools "Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time" form, giving the reason for the request. Forms are available from the school office. The request must include the reason why it is felt necessary to take leave during term time (the "exceptional" circumstances).

School Action

On receipt, the Head Teacher of the school, or such person as duly authorised by the Head Teacher to do so on their behalf, will consider the submitted application for leave of absence during term time and will take in to account the/any reason as given by the parent for seeking such leave of absence ahead of deciding whether or not such given reasons are, in their view, "exceptional" to merit the granting such leave of absence during term time.

The parent who submitted the application for leave of absence during term time will be notified by the school by letter within 7 days of the school's decision in response to the application.

Term time absence taken without authorisation may, where the criteria for doing so is met, be referred by the School to the Educational Welfare Service.

Referral may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued in accordance with Bracknell Forest Council's "*Code of Conduct and Protocol For The Issuing Of Fixed Penalty Notices*".

As a school we agree and endorse Bracknell Forest Council's "Code of Conduct and Protocol For The Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (Revised June 2017).

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice may be issued to each parent for each young person. THE RATE PER PARENT PER YOUNG PERSON WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If an issued Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the prescribed time limit for payment, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates' Court for an offence contrary to Section 444 Education Act 1996, (failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil of compulsory school age), in the same way as if the Fixed Penalty Notice had never been issued.

The purpose of the Fixed Penalty Notice, where it is considered appropriate for such Notice to be issued, is to give a parent the time limited opportunity to avoid prosecution for a substantive offence contrary to Section 444 Education 1996. Any such prosecution following non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice will be for a substantive offence contrary to S. 444 Education Act 1996, rather than for non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the less serious offence contrary to S. 444(1) Education Act 1996 (being the parent of a young person of compulsory school age who fails to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and /or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £1,000.00.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the more serious offence contrary to S. 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 (where the parent knows that the young person is failing to attend regularly at the school and the parent fails without reasonable justification to cause that young person to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and / or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £2,500.00 and / or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or else any such community based Sentence as deemed appropriate by the Court.

In addition, in all cases where one of the substantive offences is proved, the Prosecution will seek an Order for the Defendant to pay a contribution towards the Prosecution Costs of the case, including investigation costs, the application for which will be served upon the Defendants at the time of the relevant Court proceedings.

In addition, when a Court passes a sentence, it must also order that the relevant "Victim Surcharge" be paid by Defendants. Revenue raised from the Victim Surcharge is used by Central Government to fund victim of crime services through the "Victim and General Fund". The amount of the Victim Surcharge to be paid by Defendants depends on the type of Sentence imposed and, in the case of an adult offender receiving the maximum level of Sentence applicable for the type offences covered by this Attendance Policy, may result in a Victim Surcharge of up to £170.00 per Defendant / parent.

In addition to any other Sentence imposed, the Court has the ancillary power to impose a "Parenting Order", not exceeding 12 months in duration, on parents, where the Court considers such an Order appropriate. Any person found guilty of failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirement of a "Parenting Order" or with a direction of the nominated Responsible Officer in respect of it is liable to Breach proceedings and, in the event of conviction for the same, to a fine, not exceeding £1,000,00, and or any other non-imprisonable sentencing option available to the Court in such case.

Authorisation for term time leave will not be given for the following reasons:

- Availability or cost.
- Extended holiday at the beginning or end of the term.
- A term-time booking made in error by the parent or another person.

Any absence that has not been authorised may be referred to the Education Welfare Service and, where the criteria for doing so is met, may result in prosecution proceedings or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued per parent per young person.

There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which every learner is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. Parents should ensure that family holidays are taken during school holiday periods only.

The Role of the School Leadership Team

Learners learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise learners' attendance at school and everyone is clear of expectations and procedures.

- The staff at Kennel Lane School has an obligation to enquire and challenge the reasons for learners' absences and/or lateness and do insist on written evidence for any such absences.
- There is also an expectation that the staff report concerns over absence and lateness to the Head Teacher//Primary Leader /Secondary Leader or as appropriate.
- The school will send letters to parents, guardians or carers as to their young person's current attendance level, unexplained absences or lateness's or any other concerns.
- The school collects information weekly from the registers on absences. This information is forwarded to the Local Authority and Department for Education.

The Role of the Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Service strives to support schools, parents and learners with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence".

Bracknell Forest Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when learners do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Head Teacher can be issued as long as the evidence for the request is robust and the following criteria are met:

- Where there is a minimum of 10 school sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days) in any 10 week period (these do not need to be consecutive)
- Where term time leave is taken without obtaining authorisation from the school
- Unwarranted delayed return from term time leave without authorisation
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed (U code) on 10 or more occasions in a 10 week period
- Parents' or carers' failure to make arrangements to ensure that young people who have been excluded from school are not in a public place at prescribed times during the first five school days of any exclusion, without reasonable justification*

*It is incumbent upon the parent(s) in such circumstances to provide proof of reasonable justification, for example, that the young person needed to attend a pre-arranged medical appointment, or a medical emergency requiring the young person to be supervised elsewhere than at home.

A Penalty Notice will be issued on the first occasion if appropriate.

When a learner is referred to the Education Welfare Service because of persistent poor attendance there are various actions that can be taken to try to bring about an improvement. The Fast Track Intervention framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent in specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 8 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings may be initiated in the Magistrates' Court

Promoting Good Attendance

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout our School, with certificates awarded to individual learners during the academic year (September to July).

What parents can do to help

Please work with the school staff and ensure you are fully aware of the schools attendance policy as this has a huge impact on a learners' learning.

Parents must:

- Not condone your child's absences
- Telephone the school each day that your child is unable to attend school due to illness
- Send a written note to the school when your child returns
- Avoid appointments during the school day

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child's class teacher/tutor in the first instance

Governors

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.