King's Cliffe Endowed Primary School

Attendance Policy

Policy Updated – October 2024

Agreed by Governors: 12th December 2024

Chair of Governors Signature:

Review Date – October 2027

Introduction

Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we will endeavor to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress. The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision, to give our pupils the foundation to build on the strong roots of our school values to 'grow a love for learning' and develop skills for life.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

For the purposes of this policy a parent means:

- All natural parents whether married or not
- Any person with parental responsibility
- Any person who has care of a child or young person

Expectations

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality and enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

The Governing Body are expected to:

- Be responsible for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

- There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with Headteacher as part of the monitoring and review process.
- The Headteacher and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body's objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible

Parents and Pupils are expected to:

- Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is The Head Teacher

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Claire Singer and can be contacted via the Main Office.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office before 9.10am and in the afternoon before 1.30pm.

School admin staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents of pupils with poor attendance to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Ensure all absences and persistent lateness cases are investigated.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time,
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.55am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence- if the absence if expected to be more than 1 day, parents are

advised to contact the school before the end of the previous day, and advise that they will not be in school the next day (e.g Inform the office before 3pm on Monday if the child is not expected to attend on Tuesday)

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child,
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day,
- Only request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and complete a leave of absence form (Appendix A) as far in advance as possible.

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and be in their classrooms on time.

Recording attendance

Admissions Register

We are required by law to hold an admissions register alongside our attendance register.

This must contain specific details of each pupil in school, their parents and carers information and any details of admissions/re-admissions and another schools attended.

A pupils name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 2 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- Pupils must arrive in school between 8.45am and 8.55am for registration on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

Our registers are a legal record of attendance, and any amendments must be made alongside the original entry. An amendment must state; what it is, why it has been made, when the amendment was made and name and position of the person who has made it.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code, the main office will also log how late the child was, the reason for lateness and the follow up that the attendance officer has made.

As poor attendance tends to be habitual, we believe prevention and early intervention is crucial. We undertake regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If the school believes the family to be away on holiday and claiming illness the school may conduct a home visit in order to establish if the child is there or not. Further action may then be taken if deemed necessary.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the attendance officer and Head Teacher (or Deputy Head upon Head Teachers absence) will attend the pupils home address. If no response is gained the school will then contact the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not,
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained,
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly letters or sooner if once termly attendance monitoring deems necessary. If we have particular cause for concern, then the Head Teacher will arrange a phone call with the parent.

Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

It is a requirement for the Head Teacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time. If a child is absent from school for any reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible of absence and reason for it. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation, or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. 'Exceptional circumstances' are defined by the Head Teacher.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated in accordance with any leave of absence request form Appendix A or a form can be requested from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. This covers all events from one off appointments to holidays within term time.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments where reasonable – in the case of appointments these need to be infrequent and URGENT - unless for an existing or new medical condition under investigation. Checkup appointments should be booked outside school hours. These will not be authorised. Evidence of the appointment should be provided when the parents inform the school of the absence. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Each application for an Authorised Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

Legal sanctions

The local authority can impose a fine or pursue prosecution to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

For more information please visit the North Northamptonshire Council website: Penalty notices for non-school attendance | North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)

Children missing from Education

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Northamptonshire County Council's Education Entitlement & Partnership Team at 01604 365054, or make a referral through the following link:
https://northamptonshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Contact_the_Educational_Inclusion_and_Partnership_Team

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

Strategies for promoting attendance

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at Parent Consultations. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools.

Attendance monitoring

The School will:

- Consider annually, in accordance with its support needs in relation to attendance, whether it wishes to request support from an Educational Attendance Officer from NNC.
- Log conversations with parents about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.
- All absences and persistent lateness are investigated.
- Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Head teacher and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

- The Headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils each half term. The staged Approach (Appendix 1) outlines the school's approach for monitoring and enabling attendance.
- Return school data termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.
- The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.
- We will use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- It will also be used to identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- The school will conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher than average absence or for pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body.

Acting on absence

If a child is not in school and school have not been given a reason for the child's absence the following steps will be followed on the first morning of absence:

1. Phone call before 9.30am to parents
2. Follow up call before 10.00am to all contacts

3. Home visit
4. Phone police

Children absent from education/Children missing education

There is a clear distinction between children absent from education and children missing education.

Children absent from education	and	Children missing education
Is a child who is on roll at KCEPS but is not regularly attending.		Is a child of compulsory school age who isn't on a school roll or being educated elsewhere.

Our child missing from education procedures are:

- If the child is no longer on our register, if after 10 days school has not received a request for the CTF transfer from the new school we were informed the child would be attending, and no reason has been given, it is reported to NNC Education and Inclusion.

WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS Across One School Year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the Head Teacher, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Proactively use data gathered to identify pupils at risk or poor attendance

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Using information gathered above, put additional targeted support in place to help remove barriers.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school- making the possibility of legal intervention clear.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- If there are safeguarding concerns, work with children's social care and local authority to intensify support.

If pupils are at risk of becoming persistently absent the school will:

- Work with identified pupil and family to address reason for absence and discuss if there are any in school barriers
- If out of school barriers are identified signpost family to support services that may help
- Consider implementing Early Help plans, parenting contracts or Education Supervision Orders

Support for SEN or Medical Needs pupils with Poor attendance

The school will:

- Maintain the same ambitions of attendance as all other pupils and work closely with families to maximise time in school
- Ensure attendance barriers are outlined in EHCP's or other plans so that adjustments/ additional support can be tailored to help maximise attendance
- Work with additional services if necessary to help remove barriers

If a child has a social worker, the school will actively work with them to help with any barriers to attendance, inform them of any unexplained absence and keep them informed of any attendance reviews/meetings.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated or every three years-whichever happens sooner. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

In Conclusion

It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to their successes now and in their future.

King's Cliffe Endowed Primary School greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The School is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Appendix 1

Staged Approach To the Management of Attendance		
Whole school attendance is monitored at a minimum of every half term but more frequently as appropriate to the needs of the school. The whole school attendance target is based on the expected attendance set by DfE of 96%. Attendance is more closely evaluated of pupils whose attendance is below the whole school target.		
Stage	**Trigger**	**Outcome**
1	Attendance falls below the whole school target and the child's attendance is a concern.	Letter 1 will be sent to parents: Expressing concern about attendance Informing the parents of current attendance Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence' Welcoming the parents to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further. Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.
2	Parents have received a Stage 1 letter and attendance remains a concern.	Letter 2 will be sent to parents: Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance Informing the parents of current attendance Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence' Notifying parents that the child's attendance is being monitored and of the duration of the monitoring period. Welcoming the parents to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further. Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.

3	Parents have received a Stage 2 letter and attendance remains a concern.	Letter 3 will be sent to parents: Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance Informing the parents of current attendance Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence' Requesting that the parents provide medical evidence of absence for illness, to enable the school to consider the authorisation of absence. Inviting parents to an appointment with the Attendance Lead on a specific date, with the purpose of discussing attendance, agreeing an action plan of support, considering whether it may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, and setting an internal school attendance target. Notifying parents that should they choose not to attend and their child's attendance does not significantly improve a referral to the Education Entitlement Services will be triggered.
4	Parents have failed an internal school attendance target and attendance remains below the level of Persistent Absence (90%)	Letter 4 will be sent to parents: Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance Informing the parents of attendance during the target period. Notifying parents that a referral has been made to the Education Entitlement Services.
5	A Letter of Praise will be sent to parents	Thanking parents for their support in improving their child's attendance Informing the parents of attendance during the monitoring period. Notifying parents that the school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement.

Appendix 2: attendance codes check if needed

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. For detailed information on each code please visit: Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
****	Present (pm)
L	Late arrival
B	Off-site educational activity
D	Dual registered
J1	Interview
P	Sporting activity
V	Educational trip or visit
W	Work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
I	Illness
M	Medical/dental appointment

R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrival after registration closed
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Z	Pupil not on admission register
#	Planned school closure