

Kirkby Thore School

Whole School Attendance Policy

Kirkby Thore School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcome. Pupils will know that their presence is important.

Rights and Responsibilities

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that children attend school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is going to be late, parents are requested to notify the school by 9.00 a.m. on the same day – by phone call or message, or in writing.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually, and to adhere to the school's policies on behaviour and dress. All pupils' attendance will be monitored using individual attendance records.

Governors

Attendance will be an agenda item at the first Governors' meeting after the completion of the previous term. The Headteacher will report attendance issues to the governing body. The governors will nominate a member to work alongside the Head on attendance issues. An attendance summary will be incorporated in the annual report to the parents.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Each day, the teacher responsible for the class is to ensure that he/she has completed the register accurately with appropriate absence codes. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching and pastoral staff), who will respond to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care.

A pupils' absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

All unaccounted for absences will be promptly investigated, and parents and pupils will be kept informed about any attendance concerns. Pupils

and/or parents who experience difficulties with regular attendance will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from the class teacher. The Education Welfare Service will be contacted for support should the need arise. Attendance issues will be given the highest profile through Parents` Evening, Governors, Annual General Meetings, School prospectus, newsletter, letter prior to commencing school etc.

Registration

Registers will be taken punctually each day at 9.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. When a pupil misses registration and there has been no advance notification from the parent/carer then that pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absentee for that session.

Reasons for Authorised Absence

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments, but wherever possible these should be made outside of school hours
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised for:

- Shopping trips
- Looking after other family members
- Domestic chores
- Birthdays or similar events

Approved Education Activity

Pupils will not be deemed absent when out of school to take part in:

- Sporting activity
- Educational visits
- Extra-curricular activities in or with other schools
- Approved educational activities e.g. music exams

Holiday in term time

Parents are strongly encouraged to avoid booking family holidays during term time. Parents may request leave of absence, however, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher as to whether the time off will be authorised, and only then in exceptional circumstances. Any request for more than ten days leave of absence for a family holiday in any one school year, will be passed on to the school governors for their consideration. If

leave is granted, parents must appreciate it is their responsibility to ensure their child catches up with any missed work on their return. Parents should apply to the school on the appropriate form for permission at least 10 school days in advance of any such holiday.

Before granting any leave of absence the school will give consideration to:

- The pupil's previous attendance
- Academic progress
- Any examination commitments

Following up Lateness and Absence

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact school by 9.00 a.m. on the first day of all absences, and where possible to give a return date. Where this is not possible the parent/carer should keep in regular contact with the school. If a pupil is absent regularly, or apparently unnecessarily, the school will contact parents/carers to notify them of the school's concern and to emphasise the parent/carers' legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance. If a pupil is persistently absent and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the LEA Education Welfare Service. Pupils who are absent through sickness, or any other unavoidable cause, for an extended period will be supported in continuing their education at home where this is possible, and will be supported in re-integrating back into school on their return.

Promoting Attendance

Within the confines of the National Curriculum, pupils will be offered a carried, flexible and rewarding education matched to their individual needs. They will not be able to take full advantage of this unless they attend regularly.

Attendance data will be collected and analysed regularly, and combined with an annual review of the school attendance policy will inform future practice. If concerns over patterns of attendance arise, an action plan will be created to address the issues. Consultation between the school and Education Welfare Service will be arranged to support and set targets for poor attenders in partnership with parents, and other external services will be made known to parents where appropriate. The school will liaise with staff in local Secondary Schools about pupils who may require extra support during transition to Year 7.

Statutory Framework

The school's policy is based on Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act which states,

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

1. to his age, ability and aptitude, and
2. to any special needs he may have,

either by attendance at school or otherwise."

Failure to do so is a strict liability offence (Section 444(1), 1996 Education Act) with a maximum penalty of a £1,000 fine per parent per child.

Where parents are shown to have known that their child was out of school without leave of the Headteacher and that they "without reasonable justification" failed to cause the child to attend, they may be found guilty of a higher offence with a maximum penalty of £2,500 per parent per child, and/or 3 months imprisonment (Section 444(1A), 1996 Education Act).

Parenting Orders requiring parents and carers to attend parenting skills sessions can also be applied to both offences.

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Action Planning to Improve School Attendance

Whole school attendance and individual pupil attendance will be kept under regular review and the Headteacher and School Governors should have an overall responsibility for school attendance (Social Inclusion: Pupil Support 10/99 and 11/99).

Accurate marking of registers with the appropriate code letters for absences will enable detailed analysis of the nature of absence as well as the quantity. Schools with access to the SIMS attendance module or similar will be able to do this in even more detail.

This information should be compared to local and national benchmarks and targets, as well as the previous performance of the school, and combined with the whole school policy, should be formally reviewed with Governors at least once per school year. An action plan should be written to respond to identified issues and concerns.

This policy was formally adopted by the Governing Body on September 2004