



Living our learning

Knowles Primary School
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Attendance Policy

Date agreed by the Governing Body: January 2016

Date distributed to staff: February 2016

Date to be reviewed: November 2017

Introduction

For children to fulfil their full potential in school, a high level of attendance is essential. Children who attend regularly give themselves the best opportunity to achieve and succeed to a high standard.

Aims

This policy outlines the aims and expectations of Knowles Primary School to support and encourage good attendance at school.

Objectives

- To ensure parents and pupils understand what constitutes good attendance and how we will work together to encourage this.
- To ensure parents and pupils understand the measures put in to place to deal with poor attendance.

Overview

Every child has the right to come to school and have the opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development. In the first instance, it is the responsibility of a child's parent/carer to ensure attendance at school as required by law. Situations beyond a pupils and parents control may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.

The vast majority of pupils want to come to school to learn, socialise with peers and develop into well-rounded citizens. Children who do not come to school regularly are in danger of falling behind their peers and therefore not achieving to their full potential.

There may be times when a child is unhappy about attending school. Families may be going through an unsettled period of time or a change may have happened that can make attending school difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns with possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out between school, the parents and the child at the earliest possible stage. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives them the impression that school attendance doesn't matter.

Expectations

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually every day;
- To ensure that contact is made with school as soon as reasonably possible where their child is unable to attend;
- To ensure children arrive in school well prepared for their day, e.g. have had breakfast and brought the correct equipment to school;

- To contact school as soon as possible if a problem occurs that may impact their child's attendance.

The school will:

- Remind parents to contact school where a child will not be attending;
- Make first day calls to parents/carers who do not inform the school where a child does not attend;
- Monitor punctuality and absence regularly;
- Award a weekly attendance trophy;
- Celebrate and reward? award termly and annual attendance;
- Celebrate and reward? award 100% attendance.

If your child is absent

Parents/carers are asked to make contact with school before 8.50am if their child is ill or if they will not be attending or arriving late. If contact is not made, school will attempt to make contact on the first day of absence. Absences that are not explained will be marked as unauthorised.

When a pupil is late into school, i.e. after the register has been taken at 9.05am or 1.40pm, it is important that parents/carers sign in the pupil at reception on arrival. They will receive a late mark in the register.

Responses to non-attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, we need to respond effectively for safeguarding purposes. In cases where a problem may appear to be emerging, the Headteacher or Learning Mentor may telephone the families to discuss concerns or invite parents to meet about attendance, to discuss the situation.

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 85% over the school year. These are called 'persistent absentees' by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

First day absence

- Phone call home to ensure all children are accounted for.

Attendance percentages below 95%

- Parents will be contacted with a letter to outline the decline in attendance.

Attendance percentages below 90%

- Parents will be contacted with a letter to outline the decline in attendance and offer support and identify the procedures that will follow should the figure continue to drop.

Attendance percentages 85% or less

- Parents will receive a phone call outlining concerns.

Fixed penalty warnings/notices

A warning letter will be issued after 10 unauthorised **absences** have been recorded over a period of twelve weeks. The warning letter will be effective for twelve weeks and during this time it is an expectation that the child's attendance increases.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Authorised Absences will be allowed for the following reasons:

- Illness or medical appointments, although we encourage the latter to be out of school time. In some cases appointment letters may be asked for;
- Sudden and urgent family circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion;
- Religious festivals;
- Close family funerals/weddings;
- Fixed term exclusion.

Unauthorised Absences will cover the following circumstances:

- Holidays;
- Shopping trips;
- Birthday treats;
- Visits to the airport to see off/meet family members or friends;
- Any absence where no explanation is given.

Holidays

We advise parents that we follow the guidance which can be found at www.education.gov.uk:

'Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.'

Parents can be issued with a fixed penalty notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. The school works within the guidelines set out in the Milton Keynes School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

Members of staff responsible for monitoring:

Gi Sierant- Headteacher
Sarah Rice- Deputy Head teacher
Sarah Hilton- Inclusion Manager
Doll Downard- Learning Mentor