

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## Kinver High School



ENGAGE, SUCCEED, ASPIRE TO LEAD

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## 1. Rationale

Kinver High School recognizes the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality to enable students to reach their potential. We will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

DfE School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (August 2020) states

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
  - act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.”

## 2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Attendance is important as there is a clear link to good / improved academic outcomes for students who have high levels of attendance. The Government commissioned a report in 2016 looking at this link and

found that, in general, the higher the overall absence rate across the KS4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of the KS4. In particular the report notes:

- “pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent including English and mathematics than pupils missing 15-20% of KS4 lessons.”
- “The analysis of the link between overall absence (and individual reasons for absence) and attainment when taking prior attainment and pupil characteristics into account showed that, for each KS2 and KS4 measure, overall absence had a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e. every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome.”

Regular School attendance is deemed by Kinver High School to be in excess of 96%. As a minimum goal, all students should aim to have an attendance above 96%

### 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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.

### 4. School procedures

#### 4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:30pm and will be kept open until 1:40pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

To notify the school about an unplanned absence, you should contact the Attendance Officer by calling 01384 686900.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

A letter, email or phone call to the form tutor of your child or the Attendance Officer in which you detail the day and time of the planned medical or dental appointment is needed. Along with this you should provide information on your child's approximate time of return to school.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If a child is late to school after 8.50am but before AM registration has closed, they will be issued with a tutor detention. If a child is late to school after 9.07am, they will be issued with a Reflection detention. Repeated punctuality issues will warrant further sanctions which may include Reflection detentions and referral to Head of School for punctuality monitoring / report. Further intervention by SLT will be undertaken if deemed necessary.

## **4.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Processes regarding unauthorized absence:

The School operates a first day call system for managing absences, whereby parents are contacted after 10 am if their child was not present at registration and the Office has not received a message to explain the absence. When the School is not notified of the reason for a child's absence, it is marked as an unauthorised absence. Parents/carers are also contacted when students truant lessons during the day and cannot be located promptly. In both cases, by contacting the parent the school also ensure that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe.

The School will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that must be in school time. Consideration will be given to cases where students are identified as young carers, however, authorisation of absence will not be permitted for extended periods as it risks further damaging a child's potential through time missed at school.

A student's Head of School, the Attendance Officer or Senior Leaders will refer a student to our attendance consultant (EWO) and/or an Educational Welfare Officer:

- when a student is absent from school for ten days or more, and an explanation for this absence has not been provided by the child's parent/carer;
- when the reasons for the absence are deemed unsatisfactory and the parent/ carer seems unwilling to ensure that their child attends school in future in similar circumstances;
- when a student's attendance falls below 90%, over a period of a term, without good reason. This is considered by the government to reach the threshold of persistent absence from school.

To communicate attendance concerns including unauthorized absences we also have a formal procedure which involves a series of letters.

**New Academic Year Letter** will be sent to any student that had an attendance below 92% in the previous academic year to remind them of the importance of attendance and outline our expectations for the new academic year.

**Letter 1** will identify that your child's attendance is below 90%, notify the parent/carer that this figure needs to improve, and invite you to contact the school if you wish to discuss our concerns further.

**Letter 2** will be issued if a child's attendance does not make satisfactory improvements or there have been further absences. This will ask for medical evidence and warn that if medical evidence is not forthcoming, future absences will be unauthorised. The letter will also invite parent/carer into school to discuss the matter with a representative of the school e.g. Attendance office, our Attendance Consultant (EWO), Assistant Head teacher for Behaviour, or Head of School.

**Letter 3** will be issued if a student's attendance falls further or does not make satisfactory improvements - there are further absences. This will warn parents that this absence and future absence will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided. It will again invite parents/carers into school to discuss how this matter can be resolved. The Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted and will become involved in the case. It is school practice at this point for a request to be made for the Local Authority to support with statutory action.

#### **Penalty Notices:**

'Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.'

The law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

**Penalty notices** are one of the sanctions available for this offence. Penalty notices will be issued by Senior Staff at Kinver High School if the matters in question reach the thresholds highlighted below:

#### **Legal Framework:**

Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers (as well as deputy and assistant head

teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

The Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007

The Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

As a result, the Local Authority has responsibility for developing a local code of conduct that will govern how all of the partners named in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, will issue Penalty Notices.

### **Leave not authorised by the Headteacher or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher.**

The Local Authority will only issue Penalty Notices requested by a school in response to an unapproved leave of absence (including holiday related) resulting in unauthorised absence where the school has provided the necessary paperwork.

This paperwork should comprise:

- A copy of the newsletter or letter sent to all parents during the current academic year which clearly states that parents may receive a Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday in term time. (The LA does not need a hard copy of this newsletter/letter each time a school applies for an unauthorised holiday Penalty Notice, just on the first occasion each academic year.)
- A copy of the leave of absence (Holiday) Request Form submitted by parent, and a copy of the response sent to the parent by school. In the event the leave of absence (holiday) request is being denied the school's response should state the reason why the request is unauthorised and should again advise parent that they may receive a Penalty Notice if they take their child out of school and that the school has referred the matter to the Local Support Team (representing the Local Authority).

In cases where the unauthorised leave of absence occurs without prior request from the parents, or is due to unauthorised absence beyond what was agreed, the school should include all correspondence sent to the parents to explore the unauthorised absence.

- Relevant pupil Attendance of Registration Certificate signed by the Head teacher / Principal – or their nominated deputy – confirming that nonattendance during the period was unauthorised.
- Completed school unauthorised absence checklist and signed penalty notice request form. (Appendix A).

## **4.6 Reporting to parents**

As a parent/carer of a child at Kinver High School you have access to the Edge and here a detailed breakdown of your child's attendance is available in real time. If you do not have a log in, please contact Reception on 01384 686900 who can assist you with this. Attendance is also communicated via the student planner and the variety of formal reports issued throughout the academic year. You can also contact your child's form tutor who would be more than happy to supply you with information regarding current levels of attendance for your child.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs".
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.

Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case.

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage internal examinations or national tests or exams;

N.B. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

### Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.
- See section 3.5 for how we deal with unauthorized absence.

Explain other considerations relevant to your school, such as:

- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default and it is now practice for the school that students revise on site.
- The school follows Staffordshire County Council's guidelines on flexi schooling, as detailed in the 2016 document:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/schoolsandcolleges/School-Improvement/5.-Flexi-Best-Practice-Final-Version.pdf>

### 5.2 Legal sanctions (additional information to action points detailed in figure 3.5)

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

### Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.
- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

### Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of following criteria is met:

- There are at least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the current and previous term. **These absences do not need to be consecutive.**
- For unauthorised leave of absence, there must be a minimum of 2 sessions of unauthorised leave of absence (due to unauthorised leave in term or time been absent for longer than was agreed) within the total of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence required prior to issuing the penalty notice. These unauthorised absences do not need to be consecutive and should be calculated from the previous rolling calendar year.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current and previous term. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of late arrival. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.

- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

High levels of attendance will be rewarded at Reward and Recognition evenings, Half termly reward assemblies and through the issuing of positive points. Each level of the Rewards stairway will take into account students who consistently demonstrate high standards of attendance.

Kinver High School works with parents to support regular attendance by: communicating early and regularly about issues; acknowledging positive improvements; employing an attendance officer and a private attendance consultant (our own EWO). Attendance is also a regular feature of weekly monitoring with form tutors as part of the tutorial program, and is part of the QA process for Heads of School.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents/Carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents/Carers are expected to call the school each day a child is ill, state it here.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Kinver High School collects and stores attendance data on the Edge system. It is used to track the attendance of individual pupils, classes, form groups, year groups and the whole school. It is also used to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. This data is used to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions identified for those children who are in need of intervention and support.

## 8. Roles and responsibilities

### 8.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 8.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 8.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

#### **8.4 Class teachers and form tutors**

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

#### **8.5 Office/reception staff**

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour and Attitudes. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

### **10. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy and the Kinver Positive Conduct policy.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day