



Kirton Primary School Draft Attendance Policy

MISSION STATEMENT:

Kirton Primary School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible. The Government states that an attendance rate of less than 95% is likely to have detrimental effect on a child's education. It is therefore the school's aim that each of our pupils should have an attendance rate as high as possible for that child; this being in excess of 95% each academic year.

A pupil becomes a '**Persistent Absentee (PA)** when they miss **10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason** (both authorised and unauthorised). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent/carer's full support and co-operation to tackle this.

Some changes are being made to the Lincolnshire County Council code of conduct in regards to attendance. Parents should note the following changes:

From August 2024, Lincolnshire County Council will be adopting a new code of conduct with regards to attendance. In light of this, the following changes will take place:

- an increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to **£160**, halved if paid within 21 days ;
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling **3 year period** is charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second to be discharged at the lower rate of £80;
- a national limit of **2** penalty notices can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling **3 year period**, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) the case will be automatically considered for prosecution
- it should be noted that the absences (unauthorised) could be 2 holidays and then 10 days off school in a ten week period. Any unauthorised absences that total 3 within the 3 year period will trigger a prosecution.

Kirton Primary School has an attendance panel that closely monitors the performance of the whole school with regards to attendance. These people are:

- Ms. A. Tyte (School Governor Attendance Officer)
- Mr. Greaves (Leadership Team Attendance Officer) Contact via enquiries@kirton-boston-lincs.sch.uk or phone 01205722236
- Mrs Cook (Attendance Officer)
- Mrs Lea (Attendance Office)

Because attendance is of paramount importance, working closely with the above people are all the teachers at the school and the rest of the management team.

Other changes that will be implemented from August 2024 are:

The threshold for prosecution is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A session is a morning or afternoon registration session, meaning two sessions in an ordinary school day.

The threshold 'A school week' means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks).

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term)

Notice to Improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued. Parents will always be forewarned of the possible issue of a Penalty Notice by the school.

Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a Penalty Notice before the improvement period has ended. The parent will be informed in writing before a Penalty Notice is issued if it is before the end of the improvement period.

There is no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a Notice to Improve letter for the possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

A notice to improve letter can be drafted to deal with in-term holidays, persistent absence or a combination of both.

2. EXPECTATIONS:

We expect the following from parent/carers:

- ☑ to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually;
- ☑ to ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical, prior to 9.30am, whenever their child is unable to attend;
- ☑ to contact school at an early stage, when they are experiencing any issues with regards to ensuring regular school attendance and punctuality, and to work with staff in resolving any attendance issues together;
- ☑ to make medical/dental appointments outside of school hours. If this cannot be achieved the child must attend school either before or after an appointment wherever possible;

☒ to provide medical evidence for an absence, this can include an appointment card, sticker or compliment slip, a copy of a prescription or a hospital appointment letter. This must have the child's name and the date and time of the appointment on it;

☒ to ensure that their child arrives at school well prepared for the day with completed homework, PE kits etc;

☒ to contact the school whenever a problem occurs that affects the pupil's performance at the school;

☒ to avoid family holidays in term time and attempt to make all medical appointments during school holidays or out of school hours

Parent/carers and pupils can expect the following from the school;

- regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance, information regarding procedures for notification of absence on request;
- contact with parent/carers by telephone call when a pupil fails to attend school without parents/carers providing a reason for the absence;
- steps to be taken to promote the importance of attendance school and use of incentives and rewards to encourage good attendance.
- Clear, concise, accurate and punctually delivered minutes of any meetings held in relation to attendance

3. REGISTRATION:

Registration will be undertaken by the class teacher twice daily. This will be done for morning sessions between 8.55am and 9.00am and for afternoon sessions shortly after 1.00pm.

Where a child arrives after the registration time, these being 8.55am and 1.00pm, the child will be marked as late.

4. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.

☒ If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/carers, the parents/carers will be contacted by way of a telephone call. This will be followed up by a letter if no explanation is received from the parents/carers;

☒ where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the relevant staff and further action planned;

☒ if contact is made between parents/carers and the school, full support and guidance will be offered to parents/carers to ensure that attendance improves;

☒ the school's administrators will arrange to meet with parents/carers by arranging School Attendance Panels (SAPs). This meeting will include the appropriate staff and parent/carer, and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parent/carer will be offered support through an action plan to target poor attendance. This will be reviewed in a nominated time period to continually monitor with a view to improve and ensure success.

☒ consideration may also be given as to whether a home visit (HV) is necessary;

☒ where necessary, the school will liaise with the Lincolnshire County Education Welfare Service, this includes the Children Missing from Education Team (CME) and Elective Home Education Team (EHE); and the Safeguarding and Welfare Office;

5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH TEACHING, INCENTIVES AND REWARDS:

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- ☑ accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session; the benefits of good attendance promoted by teaching staff and high-lighted in school assemblies;
- ☑ children with 100% attendance are rewarded with school currency (5 Kirts), a trophy, a special certificate and a unique prize every term (six times a year).
- ☑ attendance discussed with all parents/carers at Parents' Evenings;
- ☑ recording of attendance on pupils' school reports to parents;
- ☑ attendance checked regularly by the school administrators and reviewed by SLT;
- ☑ computerised systems provide easily accessible pupil attendance records which promote speedy evaluation and timely responses by the school;

6. PUPILS ARRIVING LATE

The classroom doors are open at **8.45am** and we expect all children to be in class at the start of the school day at **8.55am**. If a child arrives at the school after **8.55am** and before **9.25am**, they will be recorded as late. Parents will be notified on the day by text or phone-call.

At **9.25am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Education Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them not to be on site, this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents/carers could face the possibility of a referral being made to Lincolnshire County Council for legal proceedings to be considered if the problem persists. Punctuality is a requirement of the Education Act and legal proceedings may be taken to ensure that this is complied with. 10 sessions (a session is either a morning or afternoon in school) missed over a ten week period is enough to trigger a fixed penalty notice or prosecution (this will now include absences that are deemed late but after the registration period).

The school has a strategy to support punctuality. A member of the office staff will record the names of all those children who arrive late. Parents/carers are asked for an explanation as to why they are late. If the problem persists the parents/carers will be invited in for a School Attendance Panel meeting to discuss the issue and to put an action plan in place to address the problem.

10. HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force from 1st September 2013 remove references to 'holiday' from school and 'extended leave of absence', as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. (i.e. the previous arrangement whereby schools could grant up to 10 days authorised holiday/absence). As a result the school will only authorise a child's absence under exceptional circumstance and in such circumstances determine the number of days a child may be away from school. Therefore, a request for leave of absence will **not** be granted for the purpose of a family holiday **unless deemed to be in exceptional circumstances**.

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If a parent wishes to seek approval for any request of absence from the school for their child(ren), then they must apply in writing to the Head of School, at least **FOUR** weeks in advance of the period of absence. They should only then remove their child(ren) if they have been notified in writing by the School that the leave of absence has been authorised. Any exceptional circumstances must be clearly set out in the written request to the Head of School who will consider each case. Guidance from central government states that leave applied for because parents cannot afford the holiday at any other time, medical treatment abroad or because of work commitments will **not** be classed as exceptional circumstances. If a parent chooses to take their child out of school during term time and it has not been approved by the Head of School, this will be coded as an unauthorised absence and an application to Lincolnshire County Council may be made for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty may result in further legal action being taken against you.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

☒ Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

☒ Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act

☒ In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00 (which will increase to £80 and £160 from August 2024).

Please note: A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if a child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

☒ Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60.00 or £120.00 (these fines will be £80 and £160 from August 2024).

11. LIASING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Other agencies are to be used where appropriate to support individual cases.

- Special Educational Needs Service
- Local Police.

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