

2019 -2021

Potential in Everyone Academy Trust
CEO – David Whitehead



Attendance Policy

Committee	Trust Board
Version	1.0
Author	
Approved on	20 November 2018
Version	1.1
	Amanda Adcock
	12 July 2019
Signature	
New Review date	July 2021

Contents

1.	Statement of Intent.....	3
2.	Parental Responsibility	3
3.	Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance	4
4.	Lateness	4
5.	Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness.....	4
6.	Authorising Absence	4
7.	Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance.....	5
8.	Children Missing Education	6
	Appendix 1: Late Letter	7
	Appendix 2: Late Letter One	8
	Appendix 3: Attendance Letter Two.....	9
	Appendix 4: Requiring Medical Evidence	10
	Appendix 5: Attendance Letter Three.....	11
	Appendix 6: Unauthorised Absence Warning letter	12
	Appendix 7: Unauthorised Absence Confirmation of Penalty Notice Request.....	13
	Appendix 8: Unauthorised Absence for Holiday	14
	Appendix 9: Unauthorised Holiday Absence Confirmation of Penalty Notice Request.....	15
	Appendix 10: Exceptional Circumstances Authorised Absence	16
	Appendix 11: Traveller Absence Due to Travelling	17
	Appendix 12: School Referral Pathway	18

1. Statement of Intent

«Name of school» is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Trust, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at «Name of school».

2. Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

- **It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known.**
- **Parents/carers are asked to contact the school to explain why their child is absent. This is recorded in the school absence book for the school's reference. Where appropriate this information may be passed to the class teacher. If parents/carers do not contact the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence a first day calling system is used. This means that the office will contact ALL contacts to establish a reason for absence. If we are still unsuccessful, two members of the Wellbeing team will make a home visit to ascertain why your child is not in school. If nobody is home, we will then notify the police as this will become a safeguarding issue.**
- **Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.**
- **Where a child is absent for 10 sessions (5 days) due to illness, medical evidence is requested (appointment card, prescription are examples of medical evidence)**

Pupils are expected to arrive by «Time»am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

At...**Name of school**.....there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

«Name of staff » has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure:

- Registers are taken atam and ...pm
- Registers are marked as / for present am session
- Registers are marked \ for present pm session
- If a child is not present at registration the school office staff will record an N code

Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

It is the responsibility of «Name of staff » (**Attendance Officer**) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided by 9.15 am, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Reason for absence is appropriate and if necessary ascertain more information as to the reason as 'ill/sick/unwell/poorly' will not be accepted.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven-day reply deadline before the absence is authorised ('O' code)
- From September 2015, the government classes any pupil who misses 10% or more of all sessions as a persistent absentee, and to comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the school is required to keep a register of these pupils and give their names to the Local Authority.

- Parents are informed termly (seasonally) of the child's attendance figure with a traffic light system in place:
 - 100% - 96%: Green
 - 90% - 95.9%: Amber
 - Less than 90%: Red

3. Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 96 - 100% attendance (if attendance is declining) – the attendance lead to investigate and notify Headteacher of concerns. «Name of staff» to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 96% attendance (If attendance is declining) – letters to be sent home to advise of low attendance.
- If attendance has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will invite parents in for a formal meeting with the Head Teacher / Family Support and Welfare officer.
- If support is requested or attendance does not improve the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

4. Lateness

At «School Name» the register is taken at «Time» am and «Time» pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

If a child is late due to a medical appointment (e.g. doctor or dentist) this will be coded as a Medical (M) once the evidence of appointment is seen.

5. Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of the child. Failure to pay in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

6. Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation for absence is received, the absence will not be authorised ('O').

There are many reasons why parents may request leave of absence but it should only be requested in exceptional circumstances and this should be done at least 2 weeks in advance.

In accordance with Government regulations the school will not authorise holiday requests during term time.

If a parent needs to discuss any exceptional circumstances for an application for leave, an appointment may be made with the Head Teacher. Leave of absence is not an automatic right. Each case will be judged on its own merits and the Head Teacher's decision is final. Once the decision to not authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken regardless, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent, for each child that is taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the local authority.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

10 unauthorised absences in a period can be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing:

- ½ day = 1 unauthorised absence
- 1 day = 2 unauthorised absences

Therefore 1 week = 10 unauthorised absences

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include: -

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

7. Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent 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's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

8. Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below: -

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Appendix 1: Late Letter

DATE

Dear

As you may be aware, we have been working hard to improve levels of attendance across our school. Attendance at school is very important to ensure successful educational outcomes for your child. This term, we have seen a much improved level of attendance for the school.

However, upon running our attendance monitoring this term, we have noticed that <insert name> has had <insert number> sessions late already this school year. We understand that on rare occasions lateness may be unavoidable but this is significantly higher than we would expect. We will continue to monitor and hope to see an improvement over the next term.

If I can support you in any way please feel free to contact me on 07594 888784. Alternatively, you can leave a message with the school office on <insert telephone number> and I will call you back.

Kind regards

Amanda Adcock
Trust Attendance Officer

cc
NAME - Headteacher

Appendix 2: Late Letter One

DATE

Dear

As I am sure you agree, attendance at school is very important to ensure successful educational outcomes for your child. We monitor attendance levels for each child closely to ensure we can support all children to be in school regularly.

However, we have noticed that <insert name> attendance is below the expected percentage of >96% at <insert figure>%. We are aware that they have had varied illnesses this term and thank you for informing us. We are sure we will see an improvement in their attendance next term.

I am enclosing a copy of your child's attendance report for you to see. If there is anything we can help you with to support <insert name> attendance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

NAME

Administrative Team

Appendix 3: Attendance Letter Two

DATE

Dear

Following our previous letter dated <insert date> I have noticed that <insert name> attendance has continued to drop this term and continues to be below the expected percentage of >96% at <insert figure> I am aware that <insert name> has had varied illnesses this term and thank you for informing us of these absences.

I am sure you share my concerns and would like to see an improvement in <insert name> attendance. I will be in touch to discuss any support we may be able to offer to ensure <insert name> attendance improves. I am enclosing a copy of <insert name> attendance report for your information.

Yours sincerely

Add name here
Family Support Assistant

Cc
NAME – Headteacher
Mrs A Adcock – Trust Attendance Officer

Appendix 4: Requiring Medical Evidence

DATE

Dear

Following on from our meeting with you, we have noticed that <insert name> attendance is now lower at <insert %>.

Unfortunately, we will now require medical evidence for <insert name> absences in order for them to be authorised. This can be in the form of an appointment letter or card, text message, copy of prescription or medicine label from GP or pharmacist, appointment card from your GP or other medical practice.

Failure to provide this will result in un-authorised marks. If a pupil has 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised during any 100 possible school sessions we may issue a penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If not paid within 28 days then court action may follow. Please note the penalty is per child per parent, and is payable direct to KCC.

We look forward to seeing an improvement in <insert name> attendance this term.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Amanda Adcock
Trust Attendance Officer

Appendix 5: Attendance Letter Three

DATE

Dear

Following letters dated <insert date(s)> I am concerned to see that <insert name> attendance has continued to drop to <insert figure %>.

The Government minimum attendance target is 96% so, as you can see, <insert name> is some way below this. I am enclosing a further copy of their attendance report for your information.

The 1996 Education Act clearly states "If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parent/carer of the child shall be guilty of an offence". The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also introduced the use of penalty notices as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance. Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school may result in prosecution in the course of a fixed penalty notice being issued.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve <insert name> attendance. We shall be inviting you and <insert name> to an attendance meeting with Mr Pearmain and Mrs Adcock.

The school office will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Pearmain

Mrs A Adcock

Trust Family Support, Wellbeing &
Designated Safeguarding Lead

Trust Attendance Officer

cc

NAME - Headteacher

Appendix 6: Unauthorised Absence Warning letter

DATE

Dear

CHILD'S NAME - Attendance

Following on from our letter dated <insert date> we are disappointed that you have failed to attend a second meeting arranged to discuss <insert name>low attendance and this will be shared with Janice Judd – our Education Welfare Officer during the next attendance review meeting.

As previously mentioned, future absences will not be authorised without medical evidence; we can always administer medicines in school if appropriate, ie for coughs and colds.

We will continue to monitor <insert name> attendance and hope to see an improvement through the term ahead.

Please note that this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any concerns.

Kind regards

Family Liaison Officer

Mrs A Adcock
Trust Attendance Officer

Appendix 7: Unauthorised Absence Confirmation of Penalty Notice Request

DATE

Dear

Re: <insert name>

With reference to our letter dated <insert date> the number of unauthorised absence sessions has now reached 10 and as a result a Penalty Notice has now been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent for each child.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Amanda Adcock
Trust Attendance Officer

cc
NAME - Headteacher

Appendix 8: Unauthorised Absence for Holiday

DATE

Dear

Thank you for your email/letter regarding leave of absence for <insert name> from <insert start date> to <insert end date>.

After careful consideration, we find that we are unable to grant your request on this occasion. The circumstances described in your letter do not meet the Department of Education requirements which came into force on 1 September 2013.

Authorisation for absence during the school term can only be given for exceptional circumstances.

Unfortunately, we will have to record these absences as unauthorised and they will show as <insert text> unauthorised absences on <insert name> attendance record one for am and one for pm for each day absent.

If a pupil has 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised during any 100 possible school sessions we may issue a penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If not paid within 28 days then court action may follow. Please note the penalty is per child per parent, and is payable direct to KCC.

If you would like to discuss this matter further please either contact the school office or me directly to arrange an appointment.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Mrs Amanda Adcock
Trust Attendance Officer
07594 888784

cc
NAME - Headteacher

Appendix 9: Unauthorised Holiday Absence Confirmation of Penalty Notice Request

DATE

Dear

Re: <insert name>

With reference to our letter dated <insert date>, the leave of absence taken between <insert start date> and <insert end date> has now been recorded as unauthorised absence, and as a result a Penalty Notice has now been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent for each child.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Amanda Adcock
Trust Attendance Officer

cc
NAME - Headteacher

Appendix 10: Exceptional Circumstances Authorised Absence

DATE

Dear

Thank you for your letter regarding leave of absence for <insert name> from <insert start date> to <insert end date> 2019.

As you will be aware, leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstance and I am pleased to inform you that we feel this falls into that category.

Therefore, <insert name> absence from <insert start date> to <insert end date> 2019 will be authorised on this occasion.

We hope you have an enjoyable time and look forward to hearing all about it from <insert name> once s/he returns to school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Amanda Adcock
Trust Attendance Officer

cc
NAME - Headteacher

Appendix 11: Traveller Absence Due to Travelling

Dear

Traveller

Absence Re:

.....

Thank you for contacting me to say that will be absent from school from as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise’s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 days to confirm a date, I will refer to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education.

After 20 days absence, there may be grounds to take’s name off of the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 12: School Referral Pathway

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

