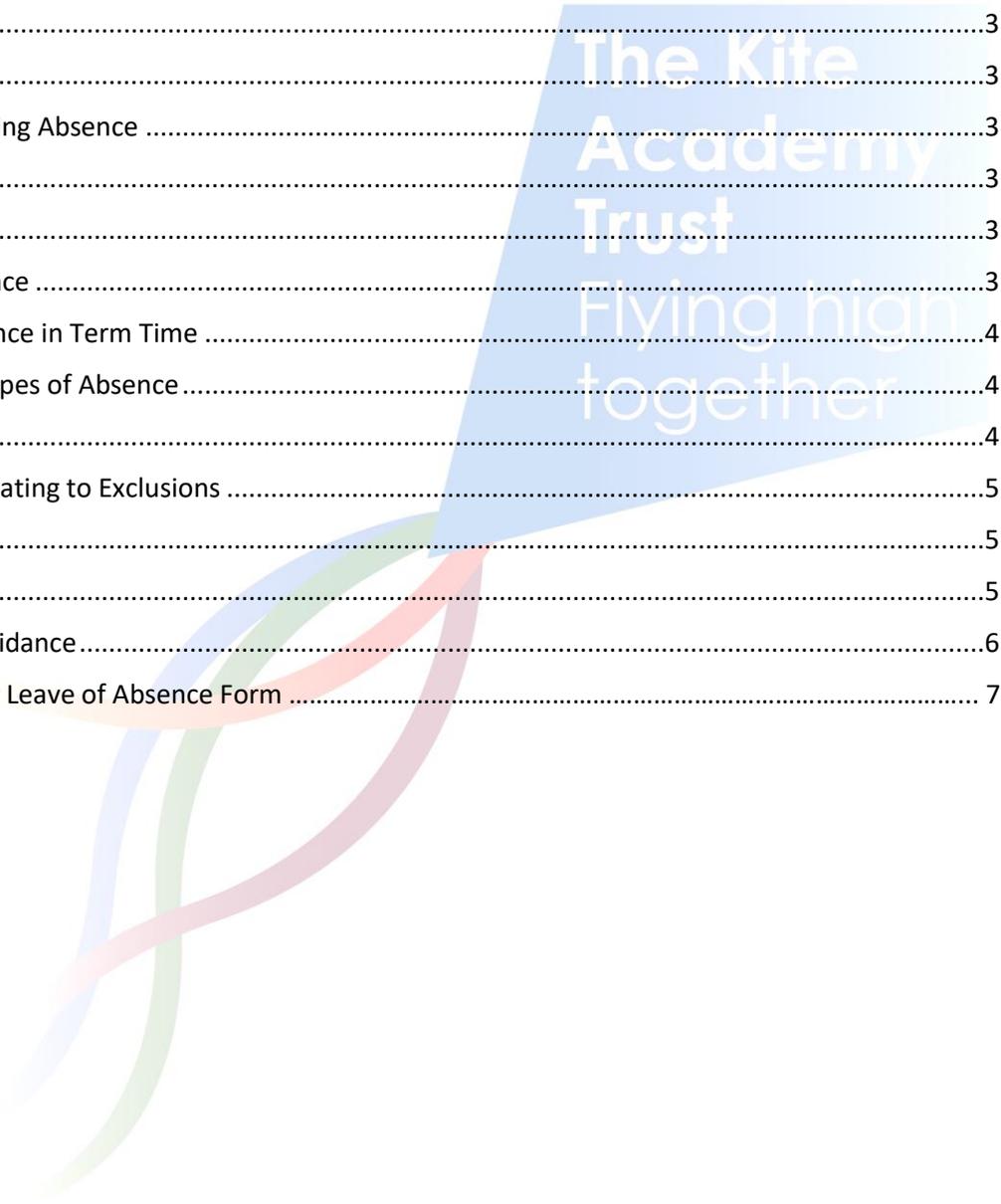


**The Kite
Academy
Trust**
Flying high
together

KITE ACADEMY TRUST
ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1 Introduction

The Kite Academy Trust is committed to developing and implementing policies and practice which support good attendance, in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and governors, and with other organisations who have an interest in- or are affected by- attendance.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, regular attendance is essential. We will consistently work with parents and pupils to achieve our expectation of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Each year, our academies will examine their attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. Pupils are expected to attend 100% of the time. The Trust and its academies will review their systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that the goals set are achieved.

2 Academy Procedures

Any child who is absent at morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of academy]. Only the Head Teacher or other person acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

3 Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Academy Staff:

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately;
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence;
- Support pupils who have been absent to engage with their learning once they return;
- regularly inform parents of the attendance of their children.

Responsibilities of Pupils:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;
- Arrive on time;
- Be responsible for registering with the office if they are late (KS2 children).

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Encourage regular attendance by supporting the values of good attendance at home and to be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Inform the academy by telephone on the first day of their child's absence by 9.30am and on any subsequent days;
- Alert the academy office of any planned absences/medical procedures well in advance;
- Support the academy with their child in achieving 100% attendance each year;

- Avoid taking their child out of academy for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance;
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at the academy punctually and prepared for the academy day (including extra-curricular activities).

PLEASE NOTE: holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

4 Lateness

Pupils arriving after the start of the academy day but before the end of registration will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late before registers close. Arrival after registers close will be marked as unauthorised absence.

At Kite Academy Trust academies, the registers close 20 minutes after the start time of each academy.

5 First Day Absence

Parents are expected to contact the academy via telephone leaving an appropriate message. This information will be collated and the registers adjusted to reflect the information. If no call is received, a phone call home will be made, usually by 10am.

6 Frequent & Continuing Absence

A courtesy phone call will be made if your child continues to be absent if you have not notified us further.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of lateness or absence, the academy will try to resolve the problem with the parent/carer. The academy will seek advice from their linked Inclusion Officer (formally Education Welfare Officer).

7 Persistent Absence

If your child's attendance falls below 90% across the academic year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child's attendance level is falling towards 90% after the first half term, we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, may ask for medical evidence or suggest a meeting with the Head Teacher or relevant staff member.

8 Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

9 Promoting Attendance

The academy will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/Academy agreement recognises the importance of good attendance. The academy will be particularly sensitive to the need to support families where attendance issues are related to a pupil's special needs.

10 Request for Absence in Term Time

Requests for absence during term time are actively discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The academy will not authorise term time absences, except in very exceptional circumstances. A Request for Leave of Absence form (see Appendix 1) must be submitted to the academy **at least two weeks in advance**.

11 Understanding Types of Absence

Pupils are expected to attend the academy every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised absence is when the academy has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory (see Appendix 1 for guidance).

This requires an Application Form (see Appendix 2) to be completed and returned well in advance of the absence to enable the Head Teacher to reach a decision about such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised absence is when the academy has not received a valid reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence following a parent/carer's request.

This includes parents giving their children permission to be absent unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings or absences which have not been explained.

If you do not request and/or receive permission for your child to be absent and do so regardless, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

An academy can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to the academy it is suspected that they have been on holiday.

Where there are several siblings across local schools, Head Teachers will always liaise with other leaders in the event of requests for approval of exceptional leave.

The academy reserves the right to ask for medical evidence of an illness as stated by the parent/carers.

12 Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Service may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a penalty notice may be issued:

Pupils identified by police and Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, states that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time

unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head Teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned (e.g. through a newsletter) that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. A reminder will be circulated to parents on a termly basis.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where unauthorised absences or late arrival after the close of registration occurs on 7 occasions in any six-week period (not including school closures). The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

13 Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

14 Inclusion Service

To help make sure that every child goes to school regularly and gets an appropriate education, each academy has an Inclusion Officer who can act on enquiries from schools, other organisations, parents and members of the public. Where a child's absence from the academy gives cause for concern, the Inclusion Officer works with everyone involved to create an action plan supporting full-time attendance and will stay involved until this is achieved. Legal action may be taken to ensure your child attends their academy.

15 Changing Schools

An in-year transfer form is available from the academy office and should be completed by the parent and Head Teacher prior to transfer. Pupils' records are sent to the new school. If they fail to attend on the anticipated start date the family will be referred to the local authority tracking officer.

Appendix 1 - Absence Guidance

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling:

The legislation requires that all children, from babies until they cease to be of compulsory school age, be licensed by the local authority in which they live, when they take part in a performance on stage or in a broadcast.

A child remains subject to these regulations until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they turn 16. The academic year runs from 1 September – 31 August inclusive.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head Teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport:

Parents of able sports players can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head Teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the academy, the parents/carers and the child. 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 the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding the academy for a number of reasons: difficulties with work; friendship problems; family difficulties. It is important that the reason for your child's reluctance to attend the academy is identified early and work together to tackle the problem. For some children the extra support of familiar staff may be called upon. In addition, it may also be helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education. Let them know that there is support at the academy, either from their class teacher or other trusted adults. Encourage them to seek out a member of staff who they feel comfortable with to talk through any worries or concerns that they have which is preventing them from coming to the academy or as a parent/carer, contact the academy and request this on your child's behalf.

Be interested in what your child is doing, chat to them about the things they have learnt, the friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

Request for Leave of Absence

Parents are asked to consider very carefully the implications for their own child and others before making a decision to remove their child from the education that is provided in academy term time. Children should only be removed in **exceptional circumstances**. These circumstances and the factors to be taken into account by parents considering such absence are given overleaf. If you intend for your child to be absent, please complete the form below and submit to the academy with **at least two weeks' notice**.

The academy is required to record all absences as **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. The decision is based on the information given below. Should a parent who is considering an absence wish to discuss the implications, please contact the academy office to make an appointment to see the Head Teacher.

Please note that we are following Surrey County Council guidelines regarding Penalty Notices:

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, per period of absence if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in a summons being served to appear at the Magistrates Court.

Please indicate which academy:

Cross Farm		Fernhill		The Grove		Holly Lodge	
Lakeside		Mytchett		Sandringham		Wyke	

Please complete the following after you have read the guidance overleaf, and send to the academy office:

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____
 Date of Absence(s): _____ Total number of days: _____

Please tick the appropriate box for the type of absence and give the reason for this absence request below:

Medical/Dental appointment	Authorised	Religious Observance	Authorised
Interview/Visit to another school	Authorised	Holiday	Unauthorised
Special Occasion (please specify reasons below)	Usually Unauthorised	Compassionate Leave (please specify reasons below)	May be authorised
Compassionate Leave (please specify reasons below)	May be authorised		

Reason for absence request: _____

I have considered the implications for both my child and others in making this decision.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Academy Use: **Authorised** **Unauthorised**

Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Head Teacher



Guidance for Parents on Pupil Attendance

We recognise that there are some genuine difficulties and tensions for parents when they make a decision to take their child out of school.

The following information is offered to help.

Why keep your child in school?

Some areas to consider are:

- Children have a right to the education that is planned and provided by school;
- Taking a child out of school can be disruptive to the child concerned both at the time, before and after the event;
- Children away from school miss the learning that has been planned. Many learning experiences cannot be packaged and sent home and are part of ongoing programmes. For this reason, children's progress may be interrupted;
- Confidence and self-esteem may be dented as some children can feel separated from their class because the experiences of the class have moved forward without them;
- A high number of absences in a class impact on the general level and pace of learning. Teaching may need to be adjusted for the whole class as foundations for the next stage may have been undermined by the absence of several children;
- There are 175 non-school days a year to spend on holidays, shopping and appointments. There are 190 school days a year.

Why take your child out of school?

There may be genuinely exceptional reasons for taking a child out of school as listed overleaf. The Kite Academy Trust policy is that absence for other reasons is not authorised.

If, after taking all the factors above into account, parents decide to take their child out of school for other than exceptional reasons as described, the parents should take responsibility for this decision and appreciate that their child's absence will be regarded as Unauthorised.

All of the Kite Academy Trust academies seek to provide the very best learning experience for your children and this principle is behind our policy on time out of academies. We hope this is helpful and our Head Teachers are very happy to discuss individual circumstances with you.

Kite Academy Trust

