

King George V Primary School



Attendance Policy

February 2018

Introduction:

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of the child's parent or carer and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our regular Newsletter;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates, rewards and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider

reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is important that the school and the parent work together as it is never better to cover up an absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

All PA cases are automatically made known to the Attendance and Prosecutions Officer.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Or, parent/carer can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with parent/carer.

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence if they have not contacted us;

- Make 'safe and well' home visits carried out by our attendance officer, Sally Beasley, e.g. if school have been unable to make contact with a family or after the third day of a pupil's absence;

We also:

- Communicate via letter about any attendance concerns we have;
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with the Head Teacher/attendance officer if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Attendance and Prosecutions Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

The Attendance and Prosecution Service (APS) :

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Prosecutions Service from the Local Authority.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance and Prosecutions Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss important learning and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

Our classroom doors open from 8.45am. However the school day officially starts at **8.50am** and we expect all pupils to be in class at that time. Doors are closed at **8.55am**.

Registers are marked by **8.55am** and a child will receive a late mark if they are

not in by that time however it is far better for a child to attend and be late than not to attend at all.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parent/carer could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher and/or Attendance and Prosecutions Officer to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach school at any time if they are having problems getting a child to school on time.

Leave of absence in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out of school during term time.

Any savings that parents/carers think they may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance via the school office. Following Government guidelines the Governing body has agreed that the Head teacher may only authorize holiday in term time under **very exceptional circumstances**. Proof may also be requested to support an application of leave. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

If unauthorised holiday is taken, school will refer the matter to the Attendance and Prosecution Service who may issue a penalty fine. More details can be found on the Sandwell Council Website.

Even in the leave of absence request satisfies the very exceptional circumstances, leave in term time will **not** be agreed:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as a child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (eg SATS)
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice or loss of school place.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and parents/carers and children have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **97%** and we will keep parents/carers updated regularly about progress to this level and how a child's attendance compares.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided via our School Newsletter.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs C White, Admin Officer

Mrs S Woodhall, School Office Manager

Miss S Penny, Head Teacher

Mrs S Beasley, Attendance Officer

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This Policy will be reviewed
September 2020

Signed:

Mrs P Dosanjh
Chair of Governors