



# Kingfisher Schools Trust

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## 1. Introduction

Kingfisher Schools Trust and Stowmarket High School are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its children and young people and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance by all. Only by attending school regularly and punctually, will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Research shows that high attainment often correlates with good attendance.

All schools recognise their responsibilities to ensure children and young people are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children and young people registered at this school. This policy is made available to all Parents/Carers and other stakeholders on our school website which can be found here: <https://www.stowhigh.com/statutory-information/policies/>.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children's Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although Parents/Carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the whole school community work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children and young people who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children and young people who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will inevitably impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at the school, miss just over 4 half-terms of learning or 19 full school days each year.

This attendance policy ensures that all stakeholders within Kingfisher Schools Trust are fully aware of and are clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

## 2. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos which values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote, support and report on punctuality in attending lessons.

## 3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school

attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents>[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and Parents/Carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Trust Board delegates some of these duties to member of the central team at Kingfisher Schools Trust to ensure timely, appropriate support and challenge of schools.

#### **4.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the members of the Academy Council
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance to be able to do so
- Working with the Parents/Carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and Parents/Carers through all available channels

#### **4.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance (also known as the 'senior attendance champion' is responsible for:**

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, Parents/Carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with Parents/Carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their Parents/Carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Promote excellent attendance by pupils and provide opportunities to celebrate good attendance every half term (including 100% attendance and improvements in attendance)

Supported by the Attendance Officer and Heads of Year, the Designated Senior Leader will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Pastoral Leadership Teams, that attendance data is available to all staff, pupils and Parents/Carers through Go4Schools, that training is available to all staff taking registers, and that a termly report is prepared for the school committee. The Assistant Headteacher will also ensure accurate attendance returns are made to the Department for Education within the stipulated time frame, as well as submit data to the Local Authority on a half term basis.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Stefan Stoneman and can be contacted via telephone (01449 613541) or email ([s.stoneman@stowhigh.com](mailto:s.stoneman@stowhigh.com)).

#### **4.4 The Attendance Officer is responsible for:**

- Collating and recording pupil registration and attendance information accurately and promptly
- Taking calls from Parents/Carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on Go4Schools
- Contacting Parents/Carers of absent children where no reason for absence received
- Recording details of pupils who arrive late or go home during the school day
- Informing the relevant Head of Year and Designated Senior Leader in charge of attendance where there are attendance concerns
- Contacting Parents/Carers where concerns are raised about absence, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data of both individual pupils and groups
- Benchmarking attendance data against national and local data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Providing information to support referrals to the Education Welfare Service and work with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Coordinating and making referrals to other agencies as appropriate to support improved pupil attendance
- Advising the Headteacher/Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Stephanie Pullen and can be contacted via telephone (01449 613541) or email ([s.pullen@stowhigh.com](mailto:s.pullen@stowhigh.com)).

#### **4.5 Class teachers/tutors are responsible for:**

- Welcoming pupils at the beginning of the day and for each lesson
- Recording registers accurately and on time for all tutor sessions and lessons, including morning and afternoon sessions, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1)
- Celebrating high attendance rates – both verbally and through the school rewards system
- Monitoring the attendance of their tutor group and classes
- Raising attendance concerns with the Attendance Officer and Head of Year
- Discussing attendance during Parent/Carer consultations, or at individual Parent/Carer meetings

#### **4.6 School Office Staff are responsible for:**

- Taking calls or receiving emails from Parents/Carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and relaying this to the Attendance Officer
- Transferring calls or sending on emails from Parents/Carers to the relevant staff member – the tutor, Head of Year or Attendance Officer – in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

#### **4.7 Parents/Carers are responsible for:**

- Making sure their child attends each school day on time, arriving by 8:45am, unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Calling or emailing the school to report their child's absence before 8:45am (on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advising when they are expected to return
- Keeping absence from school to a minimum and ensuring that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time and providing appropriate evidence to authorise this absence (e.g. appointment card/letter/prescription paperwork or packet)
- Providing the school with some form of medical certification as evidence (e.g. prescriptions or doctor's appointment cards) if absence is for more than three consecutive school days
- Making formal requests using the 'Leave of Absence' request form for planned absence in term time only if there are exceptional circumstances (as these are unlikely to be authorised) and at least two weeks in advance
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any pupil's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with in liaison with your child's Head of Year and tutor
- Making sure all contact details are correct and updated, including contact numbers and home address(es).
- Providing an emergency contact number for more than one person and keeping these details updated
- Keeping to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seeking support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the tutor, Head of Year and/or Attendance Officer

Please be aware that where this policy refers to a Parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

#### **4.8 Pupils are expected to:**

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Aim for 100% attendance
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Take pride in their attendance and punctuality

## **5 Recording Attendance**

### **5.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session as a minimum.

It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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.*

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:50am and ends at 15:10.

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 9:05am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:00pm and will be kept open until 12:15pm.

## **5.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's Parent/Carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible, either by telephone (01449 613541) or email ([Attendance@stowhigh.com](mailto:Attendance@stowhigh.com)). We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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/Carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **5.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as a single authorised session (half day) as long as the pupil's Parent/Carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. 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.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of planned term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence (where possible, at least two weeks in advance). This request must be completed using the 'Leave of Absence' request form available on the school website. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **5.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code



- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

It is crucial, for health and safety reasons, that a pupil arriving late to school signs in at the Attendance/Medical office. Likewise, pupils must arrive punctually to lessons. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their lesson, if they are late. Any pupil who arrives late to school or lesson will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

If a pupil does not arrive to lessons, this will be picked up by the Attendance Officer and measures will be taken to locate the pupil. If a pupil is found to be truant, they will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. If a pupil is not located after reasonable steps are taken, parents/carers will be notified without delay. If the school staff are unable to contact Parents/Carers and any other specified contacts, we will notify the police.

### **5.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's Parent/Carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- Attempt to reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts if there is no response from the Parent/Carer
- Conduct a home visit and possibly contact Children's Services and/or the police in line with our safeguarding procedures if we are unable to reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Contact the Parent/Carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the Education Welfare Services and other external agencies involved with the family
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their Parents/Carers to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, pursue appropriate action via the Education Welfare Services (see section 5.2 below)

### **5.6 Reporting to parents**

The school will report to Parents/Carers about their child's attendance and absence levels in termly reports. The pupil's attendance record can also be reviewed at any point by Parents/Carers via Go4Schools.

## **6 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### **6.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher may allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to

be absent for. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with our 'Leave of Absence' request form, accessible via the school website (see Appendix 5). The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## **6.2 Sanctions**

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including, but not limited to, those listed below to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### **Penalty notices**

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the Parents/Carers who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead and this could include a referral to the Magistrate's Court.

Further details can be found in Appendix 4.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## **7 Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

All staff (teaching and support) at the school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting 100% attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for promoting 100% pupil attendance by:

- Ensuring that all registers are taken accurately and within the first 10 minutes of registration or a lesson

- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence - only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence)
- Contacting the Parents/Carers by telephone or message each day a pupil is absent from school without being notified in advance and recording the contact
- Exploring possible interventions where pupils have attendance issues and where appropriate consulting with the Parents/Carers
- Consulting regularly with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern and where applicable refer cases for further action
- Analysing attendance figures, monitoring by year group as well as gender, ethnicity, Pupil Premium status and Special Educational Needs status. The school will also carefully monitor those pupils who fall into the Persistent Absence category (where attendance falls below 90%) and Severe Absence category (where attendance falls below 50%)
- Acknowledging attendance successes of individual pupils, classes or tutor groups and issuing regular rewards.
- Following up absences from any lessons in order to deal with truancy, which might occur after morning or afternoon registration sessions

In closely monitoring the attendance of the pupils on a cumulative and week-to-week basis, the school undertakes a clear step-by-step approach to declining pupil attendance:

1. Where a pupil's attendance puts them at risk of or in persistent absence (overall attendance is below 90%) a school communication (see Appendix 2) is sent home to inform the Parent/Carer of their child's current attendance and outline where additional support is available if required
2. Where a pupil's attendance does not improve following step 1, a further school communication (see Appendix 3) will be sent to Parents/Carers advising them that any further absence will become unauthorised unless supported by medical evidence and offering liaison and support if required
3. Where a pupil's attendance still does not improve, a referral can be made to the Education Welfare Officer to explore what possible support can be offered to improve the pupil's attendance

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. However, in very exceptional circumstances, the school may see there is a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution, so they will be bound by time limits. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence (see Appendix 1 for coding).

The school must also have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The school is required to put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, the school will hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Doing so provides the school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

The effectiveness of the Attendance Policy in promoting good attendance will be measured by the overall rates of pupil attendance and the numbers of pupils falling into the Persistent Absence category. This data will be shared with the Trust to improve our aspirations for our communities.

## **8 Attendance Monitoring**

### **8.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE

on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data will be 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. The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the school's Academy Council.

### **8.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year and tutor teams to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Academy Council and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

### **8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 6.2 above)

## 9 Home Visits

Home visits are important in helping the school to make and/or maintain contact with pupils of concern and, in doing so, support school attendance and safeguarding.

Each home visit is authorised by the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and may be undertaken for various reasons, including where:

- A family has not contacted the school to explain a pupil's absence on a school day
- A pupil is refusing to come into school on a school day
- A pupil has not attended for at least three school days in succession due to reported illness or other reasons
- A pupil has a medical condition/issue that prohibits them from attending school for a period of time
- A pupil is being educated off-site or at home full time – temporarily or permanently – in agreement with the school
- A pupil has learning that needs to be dropped off or collected where it has been stipulated by the school as being appropriate e.g. during a suspension or a certificated medical issue that requires the children to learn from home

The purpose of the home visit is to check on the safety and well-being of the pupil. Alongside this, it offers an opportunity to meet with families to discuss any issues concerning their child. Where applicable, the staff in attendance will try and establish why a child has been absent and will work with and support families in developing strategies to help their child attend school regularly.

We have clear protocols and procedures for staff members undertaking home visits. All home visits must be completed by at least two staff members, and they should be authorised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. In addition, wherever possible, families should be informed of the home visit prior to the arrival of staff. There will be exceptions to this due to safeguarding criteria – for example, we will undertake home visits to confirm that an absent child is at home when families are not responding to telephone calls/text messages. Upon returning to school, the members of staff will complete a record of their home visit on our safeguarding platform, CPOMS. Any child protection concerns arising from home visits will also be discussed with a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## 10 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once per year by the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance together with the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

## 11 Policy Links

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection policy
- Behaviour 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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances



Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2: Letter 1

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Onehouse Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1QR

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Email: [enquiries@stowhigh.com](mailto:enquiries@stowhigh.com)

Web: [www.stowhigh.com](http://www.stowhigh.com)

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«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Student: «forename» «surname»

Tutor Group: «year\_reg»

**Re: Overall Attendance Concern – First Letter**

We are concerned that «forename» «surname» has «total\_authorized\_absences» authorised sessions and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» unauthorised sessions this academic year, meaning their overall attendance now stands at «percentage\_attendance»%.

At Stowmarket High School, we encourage students to aim for 100% attendance. There are also new national expectations regarding attendance as we look to return to levels of attendance we had before the pandemic.

We also know that in order to ensure our students can fulfil their potential, they need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in secondary school as they miss out on crucial learning, whilst it also affects their emotional and social health and development (according to Ofsted).

We will monitor «forename»'s attendance closely in the coming weeks and, should this not improve, we will write again.

Please support us in making sure «forename» attends school regularly and continue to follow the standard procedure of telephoning the school absence line (01449 613541) when «forename» is not in school.

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact «forename»'s Head of Year.

Yours sincerely

Stefan Stoneman  
Assistant Headteacher



Kingfisher Schools Trust  
Registered address: Prospect House, Little Money Road, Loddon Business Park, Loddon, Norfolk, NR14 6JD  
Registered company number: 07682294  
Kingfisher Schools Trust is registered in England, is a charity and a company limited by guarantee



## Appendix 3: Letter 2



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«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Student: «forename» «surname»

Tutor Group: «year\_reg»

### Re: Overall Attendance Concern – Second Letter

We are very concerned that «forename» «surname» has «total\_authorized\_absences» authorised absences and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» unauthorised absences this academic year, meaning their overall attendance now stands at «percentage\_attendance»%. This follows our previous concern letter about «forename»'s attendance.

At Stowmarket High School, we encourage students to aim for 100% attendance. There are also new national expectations regarding attendance as we look to return to levels of attendance we had before the pandemic.

We also know that in order to ensure our students can fulfil their potential, they need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in secondary school as they miss out on crucial learning, whilst it also affects their emotional and social health and development (according to Ofsted).

With these considerations, you will now be required to provide medical evidence to authorise any further absence and this can include any of the following: copies of prescriptions or prescription packaging; hospital discharge or appointment letters; GP appointment notice or letter; medicinal packaging with receipt.

Please support us in making sure «forename» attends school regularly and continue to follow the standard procedure of telephoning the school absence line (01449 613541) when «forename» is not in school. You must also email the Attendance Office – [attendance@stowhigh.com](mailto:attendance@stowhigh.com) - with photos of your medical evidence on any occasion «forename» is absent from school or ask «forename» to bring copies of the evidence to the Attendance Office on return to school.

We are keen to work with you to support «forename» in making sure his attendance improves. Please contact «forename»'s Head of Year to discuss how we can help.

Yours sincerely

Stefan Stoneman  
Assistant Headteacher



## Appendix 4 – Suffolk County Council guidelines on Penalty Notice Fines

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

### Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes will come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

#### National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

**Please note:** The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

#### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

#### Per Parent\*, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent\*, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

#### \*Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

#### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

#### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

## Appendix 5: Request for / Notification of Intended Absence



Onehouse Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1QR  
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 Web: [www.stowhigh.com](http://www.stowhigh.com)

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### Request for / Notification of Intended Absence

**Please read before completing this form:**

Due to the huge importance that school attendance can make to a child's future, taking time out of school is rarely authorised. However, if you do intend to do so, it is very important that this form is completed and sent at least 2 weeks in advance where possible. This will:

- avoid school staff spending valuable time trying to contact you each day of the absence
- avoid us being concerned that your child may have gone missing and liaising with Education Welfare

We are not permitted to and will not authorise leave of absence during term time except for exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include such occasions as a family bereavement or participation at a regulated performance or approved sporting activity. We will not authorise family holidays as a matter of course. Under no circumstances will authorisation be given during, or in the two weeks before an examination period. Please note: Parents/carers are required to give clear reasons for all absences, which the school is required to record. If a child accumulates 10 or more unauthorised absences, the Education Welfare Department will be contacted and you will receive a fine (please see <https://www.stowhigh.com/statutory-information/attendance/> for further information on this). You may also:

1. Receive a letter explaining that your child's attendance is now being monitored, or
2. Be required to attend a meeting

**Completing the form:**

Section A – this section **MUST** be completed for all students involved in the intended absence.

Section B – this section is only required if you feel you have an exceptional circumstance and are requesting that the absence is authorised.

**(A) Student Details:**

Name of student (s):	Class	Teacher

The period of absence will be from: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ until \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ inclusive (inset dates)

This absence will be in order to: (please explain below)

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Name of parent / carer (please print): Mr / Miss / Mrs / Ms .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

**(B) Requesting Permission:**

Any decision will be made after consideration of the strict criteria for authorising term time absence

The school will authorise this leave of absence

The school is not allowed to authorise this leave of absence as it does not meet the exceptional circumstances stated in the school Attendance Policy.

Signed: ..... (Lead Attendance Officer) Date: .....