



Kirkbie Kendal School Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

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Member of Staff Responsible for review: Assistant Headteacher (JSd)

Governors' Committee/SLT Responsible: Curriculum

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“Kirkbie Kendal School promotes the safeguarding and welfare of children in its care; all policies support the Child Protection Policy.”

Review Sheet

The information in the table below details earlier versions of this document with a brief description of each review and how to distinguish amendments made since the previous version date (if any).

<u>Version No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.1	Curriculum 5 Dec 17	Inclusion of evidence of medical appointments and request for further information regarding unexplained absences. Changes to letters to incorporate process for post-16 students
1.2	Curriculum 20 Mar 18	Inclusion of reference to direct contact with Sixth Form students. Inclusion of reference to electronic means of contact. Removal of outdated letters.
1.3	Curriculum 4 Dec 18	Inclusion of reference to Fixed Penalty Notice; Fines; Change of title from Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to Pastoral and Attendance Support Officer (PASO)
1.4	Curriculum 8 Dec 20	Minimal changes - 'morning and afternoon lunchtime register and form time registers' under 'We encourage attendance by:'. Insertion of 'lunchtime or' afterschool detentions under 'Punctuality'
1.5	SLT 05.12.22 Curriculum 12.12.22	Under Expectations – added 'aiming for annual attendance of 97% or higher'; informing parents, carers and students of attendance record throughout the year; updating Punctuality section (persistent/extreme lateness will result in afterschool detention) Deletion of KKS attendance panel policy (Appendix 2) and insertion of Tracking, Monitoring and Evidencing Attendance at KKS as new Appendix 2;
1.6	SLT 14.10.24 Curriculum via email 05.11.24. Ratified at Curric 04.12.24	Re-written to bring in line with DFE guidelines and changes at local authority level. Set out the new legal framework for fines and clarification of national thresholds for unauthorised absence. The policy adopts the key principles from Westmorland and Furness Council's code of conduct for schools

INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is crucial to ensure pupils make progress at school and engage with their education. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible.

AIMS

Kirkbie Kendal School aims to ensure that:

At Kirkbie Kendal School we want to develop pupils who understand the importance of attending school and see the correlation between good school attendance and making the most of the opportunities offered, leading to academic achievement. We want pupils to be able to access support for any issues that may be affecting their attendance but also understand the consequences if they are persistently late to school or if their attendance drops below 90%. We want to work successfully with parents, careers, families and outside agencies sharing attendance information and providing support and interventions for pupils whose attendance becomes a concern. **We want pupils to enjoy school, their lessons and the relationships they form. We want them to feel a part of the school community** and want them to understand that poor school attendance affects the opportunities to buy into the ethos and values of our school.

The majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers, and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society.

Some pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported in meeting their attendance responsibilities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Legal proceedings are a statutory intervention used by the local authority against the parents of registered pupils who fail to attend regularly at school. Parents whose children are on a school register and fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child(ren), may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and the authority may take enforcement action through the courts to secure regular attendance.

Legal proceedings are not used as a punishment to parents for their pupils absence from school; they are a supportive measure intended to make parents realise the importance of attendance and to avoid further absence from school.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A prosecution can take place against any person who has parental responsibility for the child's education or who has care of the child. Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children are properly educated. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. If you allow your child to be absent from school without good reason, the school will not authorise the absence, you may be committing an offence, and you could be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. However, pupils who attend 6th Form at Kirkbie Kendal School will have their attendance and punctuality tracked and monitored using the same systems as the rest of the school.

Under the Education Act 1996, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

LEGAL INTERVENTION

Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be considered however; initiating prosecution proceedings is a serious step that is normally taken by an Attendance Support Officer or other relevant officer at the LA.

All alternatives to prosecution will be considered and discounted ahead of considering prosecution. These include *Attendance Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.*

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

- *A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of up to three months.*

- *Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Attendance Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.*

Attendance contracts

- *An attendance contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.*
- *The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.*
- *The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.*

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- *A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school.*
- *A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence without reasons provided and/or accepted as exceptional by the headteacher/principal.*

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £160 fine is paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Westmorland and Furness Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

ATTENDANCE AT 6TH FORM

Pupils who attend 6th Form at Kirkbie Kendal School will have their subject attendance tracked and monitored using the same systems and pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4. Attendance data will be shared with parents and pupils regularly and when subject attendance falls below our agreed threshold work will be undertaken to identify attendance barriers and interventions will be used to support pupils and families to improve attendance with the support and guidance from the school. However, we understand the flexibility needed at Key Stage 5 to support learning outside the classroom, enrichment opportunities and the development that takes place at the life stage that may impact attendance.

Our attendance policy follows the follow the *ESFA funding guidance for young people 2024-25* which states that.

“Institutions must ensure that students are withdrawn from a programme where they have not attended classes for 4 continuous weeks, excluding holidays. Withdrawals must be actioned in a timely manner, and where a student has not been withdrawn but has been absent for more than 4 weeks, there must be auditable evidence of an intention to return”

NATIONAL THRESHOLDS FOR UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The national threshold for unauthorised leave of absence is clear and relates to when a pupil is recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks with one of, or a combination of the following codes:
G, N, O, U

Coding of absence (Please see Appendix 4)

Kirkbie Kendal School will follow the national and local guidance provided by Westmorland and Furness Council as well as their code of conduct. (Appendix 5)

EXPECTATIONS

Kirkbie Kendal School expects that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly. Aiming for an annual attendance of 97% or higher.
- Arrive punctually and be appropriately prepared for the day

Kirkbie Kendal School expects that parents/carers will:

- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/ren attends school.
- Support their child in attending school on time and ready to learn.
- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours when possible.
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school.
- Use Edulink to notify school of any absences including appointments medical or other wise
- Seek permission from the school for leave of absence only in "exceptional circumstances", and not repeatedly. (using the "Request for Absence" google form located in the attendance section of the school website.
- Communicate with school any ongoing medical concerns impacting on child's attendance to school

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from Kirkbie Kendal School:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Contact when a pupil is absent without explanation.
- Action on any attendance problem notified to the school.
- Referral of specific attendance issues to the School's Pastoral and Attendance Officer
- Notify the LEA when absence falls below 90% or there are 10 sessions missed within 10 weeks, this can include lateness to school

We encourage attendance by:

- Consistent, clear communication with parents/carers and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance.
- Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with Governors, teachers, parents/carers and pupils.
- Informing parents, pupils and carers of their attendance data throughout the year.
- The accurate completion of each lesson register and morning and afternoon form time registers.
- Acknowledging excellent attendance (97% KKS target)

Kirkbie Kendal School responds to non-attendance by:

- Contacting parents/carers on the first day of an absence if no reason has been received. (This will usually be by text message, but could use alternative methods of communication).
- If there is no response to the first contact a further request for information may be sent to enquire about the unexplained absence.
- Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging the school staff will work to help resolve any difficulties.
- Where there is no, or limited, response to school intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without explanation the school may refer to the Pastoral and Attendance Officer (PASO). The school may also at this point investigate the first day contact as advised by and agreed with PASO and decide on the intervention needed. (For post-16 pupils, contact will be made with the appropriate persons. Pupils aged 18 or over will be contacted directly).
- Where there is no, or limited, improvement in attendance a referral may be made to the Inclusion Officer /Children's Services/Local Authority and/or other relevant action taken to secure attendance.

PUNCTUALITY

Students are expected in form and registered by 8:45 am and 1:50 pm for afternoon registration. Students who are late to registration will be issued with an L mark and consequence. These L marks and consequences will be monitored by Heads of Year and the Attendance Team and further interventions or sanctions may be needed to improve punctuality to school. Students who arrive late to school and miss morning registration will be issued with a 30 minute same day afterschool detention.

If pupils miss the close of registration (*no more than thirty minutes after the opening of the register*); Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late with a U code. This is not authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate. Students will be issued with a 60 minute same day afterschool detention.

On arrival after the close of register, Students must report to the school office to sign in ensuring that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

PERSISTANT ABSENCE And SEVERELY 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

Persistent Absence is when a pupils absence falls below 90% meaning they have missed 19 school days across the academic year which is an equivalent to 95 lessons. A pupil is classed as severely absent when their attendance falls below 60%. This means they have been absent for a minimum of 70 days which is 350 lessons.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Any term time absence requests must be made via the Absence Request Google Form found located in the ATTENDANCE section of our school website.

[KKS Absence Request Form](#)

Headteachers will only grant a request for a leave of absence if an application has been made in advance to the school. When such a request is made, any leave can only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances relating to this application. Any applications made where the circumstances are not deemed exceptional will be marked as unauthorised and may incur a fine and further intervention from the LEA.

Failing to ensure regular school attendance by taking your child out of school in term time for a holiday is an offence under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the 1996 Education act. The Local Authority requests any unauthorised absence to be reported to them to be investigated. The Local Authority may then choose to impose a Section 444A Penalty Notice in the order of a fine for the offences given above. The amount of the penalty notice is £160 (per parent, per child). There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. In some cases prosecution and a fine for up to £2500 or up to 3 months imprisonment may be given. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

At Kirkbie Kendal School, we will continue to consider all applications for leave of absence individually. "Exceptional" circumstances, where an absence may be authorised are considered to include:

- Serious illness of a close family member.

- Funerals.
- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Representation in national or county sports or performing arts events or similar.

Circumstances that are **not** deemed “exceptional” include:

- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad.
- Visiting relatives.
- Family day trips (to exhibitions, theatre, agricultural shows etc).
- Visiting family/friends who have different holidays.

When making an application for leave of absence during term time parents/carers will need to cite the **exceptional circumstances** when submitting their online form. The school may ask for further information when such requests are made, and will challenge any unexplained absences to ensure the register is correctly maintained.

RELATED POLICIES

Behaviour for Learning
Safeguarding/Child Protection

THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING FORMATS:

PAPER
ENLARGED PRINT
EMAIL
WEBSITE

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Referral to the Pastoral and Attendance Officer.
- Appendix 2 - Sanctions and Attendance
- Appendix 3 - Link to Westmorland and Furness Council Code of Conduct
- Appendix 4 - Absence codes
- Appendix 5- KKS Attendance Flow Chart

REFERRAL CRITERIA TO THE PASTORAL AND ATTENDANCE OFFICER (PASO)

Criteria:

Where a pupil's access to education is restricted, for whatever reason, it may be that the School's PASO will need to take some action and engage in work with the child or family or other appropriate agency, such as the Local Authority. This restricted access to education can include: reduced attendance rates, post registration truancy, increasing punctuality problems, exclusions, illness or unexplained absence or not being in a fit state to learn. These are examples and not an exhaustive list.

Pupils with attendance rates under 90% over a sustained period are considered by the DfE to be Persistent Absentees and school will take further intervention to support pupils to attend school.

If a pupil is likely to need attention from the PASO, a decision by the Head of Year and the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) will be made about deployment of PASO time.

The School's PASO will make contact with parents/carers and pupils and undertake home visits as appropriate.

The Pastoral and Attendance Support officer can facilitate the processes for the following legal and financial sanctions against parents, if their child fails to attend school:

- Fixed Penalty Notices (fine).
- An Education Supervision Order issued by the family court.
- Prosecution of parents in a Magistrates' court.

SANCTIONS AND ATTENDANCE

Tracking, Monitoring and Evidencing Attendance at Kirkbie Kendal School.

Data and tracking systems will be used to monitor attendance and look for patterns. The school will use these tracking and monitoring systems to influence sanctions and interventions designed to improve behaviour where trends have been identified.

School will notify parents/carers and pupils when attendance falls below 90%.

This will trigger school look at a variety of sanctions and interventions designed to improve punctuality and attendance. Examples of tracking systems that school will use are:

1. Whole school tracker - track whole school attendance over a period of time
2. Groups attendance tracker - used to track the attendance of groups of pupils
3. Year group tracking - to identify pupils per year group who are an attendance concern
4. Alternative provisions tracking-attendance, progress and welfare tracked of pupils at alternative provisions.
5. 6th Form Attendance Tracker
6. PA and SA Attendance Tracker

Interventions

Where attendance is a concern Kirkbie Kendal School will use a range of interventions, examples of which are:

1. Writing to parents regularly with attendance data and concerns
2. Pre-attendance plans where attendance is a concern
3. Heads of Year attendance plans
4. Early Help Assessment for attendance
5. Attendance plans – PASO, Pastoral and Attendance Officer
6. Attendance plans held by the Local Authority
7. Transition timetables
8. Phone calls home
9. Home visits
10. Meetings in school with parents
11. Form tutor conversations with pupil
12. Referral inclusion officer
13. Attend Framework

Attendance Plans

Where attendance is an ongoing concern and low-level interventions have not seen any improvements in attendance or where there is a pattern of poor attendance, pupils and families will be placed on an attendance plan. This plan will be co-ordinated by Form Tutor, Head of Year, the Pastoral and Attendance Office or a member of the school leadership team.

These plans will include a meeting in school with pupils and families where attendance targets will be set alongside looking at ways to support good attendance at school.

Local Authority Referral

Where significant improvements have not been made following an attendance plan then a referral will be made to Westmorland and Furnace's Attendance and Inclusion Officer. They will then take over the plan and set their own measurable targets. Again, needs will be

identified and support will be provided. A lack of improvement seen here could lead to further action taken by the Local Authority including fixed penalty notices (fines) and/or prosecution.

Early Help Assessments

Where there is multi-agency involvement with families then the school will look to open an Early Help Assessment. Again, this measure is design to support pupils and families to help achieve good attendance in school.

WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ISSUING PENALTY
NOTICES FOR SCHOOL ABSENCE 2024:

Attendance Codes

Code	Reason
B	Educated Off Site
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Absent Leave of absence
Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
Code C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
Code C2	Reduced timetable
D	Dual Registration
E	Exclusion
G	Holiday not granted by the school
I	Illness
J1	Leave of absence for attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
L	Late (before registration has closed) – being regularly late or accumulating unauthorised absence after the register has closed school should follow the poor school attendance
U	Late (after registration has closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious Observance
T	Traveller absence
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y3	Unable to attend due to partial closure of the school premises
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend due to public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Z	Pupil not on roll
#	School closed to pupils

School monitors all attendance – identifies and intervenes when attendance causing concern.
For pupils aged 18 or over contact may be made directly with the pupil.

Attendance continues to cause concern.
School undertakes assessment of reasons and implements intervention and monitoring.
Schools use attendance action plans as needed

Assessment identifies need for multi-agency support. School uses Early Help process and engages with other agencies to meet needs.

Interviews identify risk of significant harm follow child protection procedures.

School undertakes attendance action plans. No improvement.
Contact Inclusion Officer for advice

Three months of professional engagement no improvement and ongoing assessment indicates enforcement best option. Contact Inclusion Officer for guidance	No improvement after regular review and assessment shows additional factors e.g. drug and alcohol use in the home or risk of significant harm. Refer for specialist assessment
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Assessment identifies significant issues impacting on wellbeing of child which mean school attendance is only a symptom. Plan in place under CP procedures.

Aspects of wellbeing improve but attendance remains an issue.
Contact Inclusion Officer for intervention.

Inclusion Officer to work with School and/ or lead professional or case holder to identify appropriate next steps including legal action.