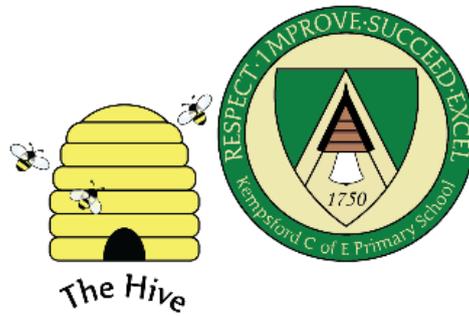

Kempsford CoE Primary School



Attendance Policy

Document History

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	1 st April 2020	New policy document approved
2.0	November 2023	Covid Guidance updated Update links for Gloucestershire Council Attendance CME information updated Useful contacts added
3.0	April 2025	Policy revised and includes fuller details on penalty notices and processes for attendance and absence
Next Review Date: April 2026		

1. Statement of Intent

As a school we strive to create a stable and comfortable environment for children to learn and grow. School can be a challenging environment for some children, but attending lessons and learning alongside their peers can be a positive and encouraging aspect of their school life. If regular absence occurs, it can feel more difficult for the child to experience this and lead to further absence and possibly falling behind on their learning journey.

This policy has been created to represent our commitment to regular attendance in school. The majority of pupils attend at least 97% of the time and we aim for this level of attendance. This policy lays out our principles, process and practice we undertake to encourage attendance but to also address absence.

1.1 Our Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Children whose attendance is low are more likely to have poor outcomes, so will be treated as vulnerable.

1.2 The aims of this policy

- Outline the responsibilities held by members of the school community, including parents, staff and governors, with regard to promoting excellent pupil attendance;
- Highlight the steps taken by the school in striving towards continued improvements in pupil attendance and to minimise any levels of persistent absence;
- To carry out our duty to safeguard pupils to the best of our ability.
- Explain the procedures followed within school related to attendance and term-time holidays.

2. What we expect from parents/carers:

- Encourage school attendance and the value of attending school regularly
- Ensure up to date contact information is provided to the school office and details of two contacts for emergency use
- Telephone the school for each day of absence, even if it's a continuous bout of illness
- Provide medical evidence, if possible, indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor, or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation arises. This might include an appointment note or an NHS App message. Whenever possible all appointments should be made outside of school hours.

- Ensure that your child arrives at school on time each day.
- Let the school know if your child is going to be late, e.g., if a car breaks down, if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Book family holidays during school holiday time.
- Attendance is measured by the number of sessions your child is present for. There are two sessions in each school day.

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 Head Teacher creates an offence in law.

3. Types of absence and recording correctly

3.1 Understanding the type of absence we record

It is our duty to record every half-day absence as either an Authorised or Unauthorised absence. In order to record this correctly, it is important we understand the reason for the absence.

Types of Authorised Absence may include:	Types of Unauthorised absence can include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine illness of the pupil; Hospital/dental/doctor appointment for the pupil that cannot be outside of school; • Major Religious observances • Visits to prospective new schools • External exams or educational assessments • Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park; a birthday treat; • Oversleeping due to a late night; • Looking after other children / other family member; • Appointments for other family members • Holidays during term time

Only school can authorise an absence. Parents/carers are not able to do this even if they feel it may be an authorised absence.

There are certain scenarios where the school can change an unauthorised absence to an authorised one and vice versa due to additional information being shared with the school.

3.2 Repeated absence due to illness

If your child has repeated bouts of illness, we may request medical evidence for each future period of illness. Examples could be a doctor's note, hospital letter or copy of a prescription. In some circumstances, we may request written permission from you to make our own enquiries.

3.3 Governors

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

4. School Day and procedures

4.1 Registration process and time keeping

Registration is taken at the start of each session daily, 8.50am and 1pm, to determine a child's presence for that half of the day.

Children enter school at 8.45am. The register remains open for up to 15 minutes and if a pupil arrives after 8.50 am, but before the end of the registration period will be marked down as L (Late before the register closes) which is still a present mark. The parent/carer will be asked to sign them in and give the reason as to why the child is late.

If the child arrives late with no carer/parent present, we will contact you directly to understand the reason for being late.

If a pupil arrives after this time, and the register has closed, the child will be marked as U (Unauthorised).

Only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence. If it is not clear or communicated why the absence has occurred at registration stage, then we have the right to mark it down as Unauthorised. Members of staff are within their rights to ask questions regarding a child's attendance and punctuality. They can also request evidence to support the reason for absence at school.

4.2 Procedure to follow for first day absence

You must inform the school by 9.00 am that your child is unable to attend that day for any reason. If you do not receive any notification, we will contact you as early as we can on that school day. This is because we want to ensure the welfare of your child is met and that they have not left for school but not arrived.

4.3 Continued Absence and process to address

If after three days of absence, your child has not been seen and you have not contacted the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with you, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

If this is unsuccessful, we will make a home visit to check the safety and wellbeing of your child. We may also contact officers from the Local Authority.

If we have concerns about your child's attendance, we will invite you into school to discuss the matter. If attendance fails to improve, we will refer the matter to the Local Authority.

4.4 Safeguarding

Where a child is not attending school, cannot be traced/contact cannot be made with the parents or has moved without a forwarding address, we are required to inform the local authority that the child is missing. The school may carry out a home visit and refer the family to social care and the police to ensure any concerns for the child's welfare have been thoroughly investigated. Pupils will not be removed from the school roll until notified by the Local Authority that their enquiries are complete.

If we cannot get a response from any contact on our system and this is a family/child who has social care involvement we would contact the social worker. If the family is not known to social care but they are a family we are monitoring for safeguarding concerns, we would contact the Attendance Officer and request a home visit.

A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of the absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point the child will be deemed to be 'missing in education'.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. Our School recognises that children missing in education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual and criminal exploitation. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

4.5 Children Missing from Education (CME)

All Local Authorities have a legal responsibility to identify young people who are missing from education (CME) and those young people at risk of missing education. Where necessary, Local Authorities must return them to suitable education.

This applies to any young person of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll or receiving suitable education elsewhere and has been out of any education for a substantial period, usually more than four weeks.

We have a legal duty to undertake our own checks first and will notify the Local Authority if a young person has left the school and their whereabouts are unknown.

4.6 Persistent and Severe Absence Procedures

If your child misses 10% or more of their schooling across a year for whatever reason, whether it is authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both, they become a '*Persistent Absentee*.' Missing 50% or more of school is defined as *severe absence*. At this point your child would not be receiving a suitable education and their outcomes will be affected. We will inform you if your child is moving into the category of persistent absence, and your child's attendance will be monitored. This is because young people can easily get into a habit of missing school. Without help it can rapidly get worse.

It is essential that we avoid the kind of impact that poor attendance can have on your child. If you are facing circumstances which make it difficult to ensure your child's attendance at school, you should tell us. We will meet with you and provide access to wider support services to help remove barriers to attendance.

We monitor registers to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA). Initially we will try to resolve the problem with you. We will agree actions to improve attendance. However, if the pattern continues, we will make a referral to the Local Authority.

4.7 Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

If your child is likely to be absent for longer than 15 days due to health needs you should tell us as soon as possible. We will work with you, the Local Authority and medical professionals where appropriate to ensure that your child will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes public exam provision and the education of siblings where your family have had to travel and stay away from the home. Such an absence will normally involve medical professionals. In most cases, we will try to minimise the amount of time your child spends away from school, so that they stay connected with their teachers and their friends.

5 Expectations for attendance

5.1 Attendance percentages explained

We use the following percentages to classify our attendance:

98%+ Outstanding

95% - 97% Good

90 – 94% Poor

Below 90% Unsatisfactory – officially 'persistently absent'.

Expectations are communicated with parents at the beginning of every academic year and on a regular basis via newsletters. The table below is always included in the information shared.

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Equates to approximately this many weeks' absent	Equates to this many lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

6 Requesting leave of absence/holidays

6.1 Booking & notification procedure

We believe that any absence from school disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress and should be avoided. Any requests for time off for a holiday will not be authorised.

However, we do recognise that there may be times when a pupil requires exceptional leave during term time for short periods of time (e.g. attending a close family funeral or wedding or possibly due to restrictions due to family in the armed forces). In these special circumstances, a 'Leave Of Absence' form should be completed. This application should be completed by the parent with whom the child normally resides. The Head Teacher will then formally respond to this request in writing. Prior and current attendance will influence the ultimate school response and decision and if leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time a pupil can have away from school.

6.2 Penalty Notices for Term Time Holidays

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority, not the school directly. The Local Authority may issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices or refer to court for prosecution in line with the National Framework where absences were unauthorised, and support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement, which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. The threshold is **10 sessions** of unauthorised absence. This can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, all taken within any 10 school week period which may span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

As referenced earlier in this policy, each school day is made up to 2 sessions; one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

6.3 Breakdown of the penalty costs

- For a first penalty notice issued within a rolling three-year period, the fine is £80.
- A second penalty notice within the same period is £160, if paid between 21 and 28 days from issue.

What happens if the fine is not paid?

- If the penalty is not paid within the timeframe, parents may be prosecuted and face a fine of up to £1000.
- A fine of up to £2,500 and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What should I do if my child is unwell?

A. Children should not come to school if they are obviously unwell. You must telephone the school as soon as you know your child will not be attending that day. You are expected to give the reason for absence, and indicate if it is likely your child will be absent longer than one day. If you do not contact the school then you will be contacted. If the school is unable to contact you and you have not contacted the school it will be assumed that the absence is unauthorised unless a legitimate reason is provided at a later date.

Absence for genuine illness is always authorised.

Q. I need to take my child to the dentist/doctor. What do I do about them coming to school?

A. Most routine appointments can be made outside of school hours. Sometimes you need to see a doctor more urgently, so be guided by what they say as to whether your child comes to school afterwards. If your child is absent due to attending a medical or dental appointment, please contact the school to let us know. We acknowledge that some 'specialist' appointments with both external school support services and NHS consultants are unavoidable. In this case, it will be an authorised absence.

Q. What will happen if holiday absence is not authorised?

A. The head teacher will respond to your letter within two weeks, confirming if the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

At this point, you must decide if the holiday is still to be booked – the expectation is that it is not, and that you book a holiday during the twelve weeks of the year outside of school term dates.

Please note that no holiday absences will be authorised under any circumstances during times when internal assessments and tests or external SATs tests or revision are being undertaken.

Q. How much is the Fixed Penalty Notice?

A. As shared in this policy, this is issued by the Local Authority. If the penalty is paid within 21 days, the penalty is £60. If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is £120. The LA will not accept payment after 28 days and will proceed to prosecution. If there are a further 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period following a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' a further 'Fixed Penalty Notice' could be issued without warning. The guidance also states when a Penalty notice will be given regarding unauthorised absences and the council leaflet can be found here: [gcc-nti-and-pn-information.pdf](#)

Q. What happens if we just go on holiday without requesting authorisation?

A. If families go away on holiday without asking for authorisation this also counts as unauthorised absence, and will be treated accordingly. You will be asked to attend a meeting on your return to discuss the circumstances of your child's absence.

Q. What if I say my child is ill to avoid a fine?

A. If a child has been absent and a parent sends a letter saying they have been unwell and it is thought this is not true, you may have to attend a meeting at the school to discuss your child's absence.

Q. What if I make up a reason that I think will convince the head teacher to authorise absence?

A. Should the information given in your letter requesting absence be incorrect, any authorisation will immediately be withdrawn. Examples of this include attending a wedding or visiting sick relatives, spending time with a parent not living with the child, which turn out to be untrue.

It is completely unacceptable to involve a child in such a lie: this causes immense stress for the child concerned, who of course knows it is wrong to not tell the truth.

The end result is that a warning is issued as before, and you will be required to attend to a meeting and explain the real reason for the absence.

Q. Where can I find out more about the Gloucestershire Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices?

A. This is the guidance that schools must follow, before a Penalty Notice may be issued to the parents of a child who attends a Gloucestershire school. A copy of this can be found on [Attendance and absence from school | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Q. What happens to my child's attendance records when they change schools?

A. Attendance records, along with information about any Penalty Warning Notices etc. form part of your child's formal records. These are passed on to secondary school, or to another primary school should your child change schools before the end of their primary education. All schools are expected to follow the same regulations with regard to their policy for attendance.

Q. My child cries when I bring them to school. What can I do?

A. It is not uncommon for young people to feel anxious about going to school, and it is often tough for parents to take a firm line. However, it is really important for children to get into the habit of going to school right from the start. It is very rare for a young person to continue to be distressed after they have arrived in school and settled in, so do not sit worrying all day. School staff are experts at helping young people who are anxious, so if it is happening regularly, talk about it with staff.

Q. I'm stressed about other things. If my kid won't get out of bed there's nothing I can do, is there?

A. It is extremely stressful if your child refuses to come to school, especially if you have other pressures in your life. However, do not be tempted to accept it. Please come and speak with staff at school. Together we may be able to find a solution. If your child is not attending and you do not contact us, our only recourse is legal action.

Q. My child is being bullied and doesn't want to go to school.

We do not tolerate any form of bullying and take accusations and incidents very seriously. We need to work together if you think your child is being bullied. Please read our antibullying policy and get in touch with us so that we can look to resolve any issues.

Useful Contacts

- Education Performance and Inclusion team: 01452 426960
- Children Missing Education Officer: 01452 426960
- Head of Virtual School for Looked After Children: 01452 425357
- Schools Admissions: 01452 425407