

## **Katharine Lady Berkeley's School**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Katharine Lady Berkeley's School (the "**School**") believes that regular and punctual attendance at School is vital in ensuring that its pupils are performing to the best of their ability. Absence from school is recognised as a safeguarding issue as it places children at risk and in some cases, can lead to children being involved in criminal behaviour.

The School is aware that regular attendance at school is closely related to a pupil's attainment and progress. Attending school regularly supports intellectual, social, and emotional development and is essential if pupils are to benefit fully from school life. It also safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents. Absence, whether long term, frequent or occasional leads to missed experiences and may cause fractured social relationships which in turn encourages a further increase in non-attendance. As a result, regular attendance at School is of paramount importance.

Under the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so, without reasonable excuse, can result in referral to the Local Authority and may lead to fines and even prosecution for parents.

The School strives to work in partnership with pupils, parents, and external agencies to support all families and ensure that our pupils make excellent progress with their education and beyond. 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.

The School is committed to the principles stated in this Attendance Policy. This policy is prepared in accordance with the Education Act 1996, the Department for Education guidance "*School attendance*" (August 2020) and should be read in conjunction with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding and Behaviour policies.

#### **Aims**

The School aims to ensure that:

- all pupils attend school regularly and punctually and receive a full-time, suitable education which maximises opportunities for achieving their full potential. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- pupils are provided with a welcoming and supportive environment, so that every pupil feels valued, safe and included

- action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance
- the School's duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability is discharged
- those responsible for the pupil's education, including parents, carers staff and governors, understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance
- life chances of the pupils attending the School are improved and pupils are prepared to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between secondary school, higher education and employment or training
- to reduce persistent absence and term time holidays/leave of absence
- robust systems are put in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality through the School

### **Expectations**

Good attendance and punctuality depend on a partnership between pupils, parents, the School and external agencies.

The School expects that all pupils will:

1. attend every day that the School is open unless an acceptable reason for absence is given and authorised by the School
2. arrive at School on time. Registration starts at 8.25am with the register being taken once students are settled. Pupils arriving after the register has been called, but before 9.30am are marked as L (late but present. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as U (unauthorised absence). Parents may be issued with a penalty notice if their child is repeatedly late
3. arrive at School appropriately prepared to begin their day
4. report to Reception to sign in if they arrive after registration has finished as 8.45am. (this is a Health and Safety requirement)
5. not leave the School grounds without permission and, if permission has been given by a parent and approved by the School, bring a note and sign out at Reception, unless an email has been sent to [attendance@klbschool.org.uk](mailto:attendance@klbschool.org.uk)
6. make every effort to catch up with any work missed when returning following any absence
7. report to their tutor, Head of Year, or the Education Welfare Officers any issues or problems they are having within the School that may affect their learning and attendance
8. comply with sanctions for poor punctuality

The School expects that parents/carers will:

1. fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child attends school on time each day, aiming for 100% attendance each year
2. notify the School on the first day of any absence due to illness, and every subsequent day of absence thereafter, by telephone or email, and provide medical evidence where requested by the School (if the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the School can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. It is at the School's discretion whether any absences are authorised)
3. keep the School well informed in the event of a lengthy absence
4. respond promptly to any communication from the School regarding their child's attendance
5. contact the School at the outset to discuss any concerns they may have about their child's attendance, including letting the School know if the pupil be late to School, for example, when a car breaks down or an urgent appointment has been made
6. work in partnership with the School to resolve any issues that may be having an impact on their child's attendance and work together to improve the child's attendance
7. endeavour to keep medical appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the parent should endeavour to keep the pupil out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment
8. avoid taking their children on holiday during term time, except in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, where prior permission of the Head teacher should be sought via the Leave of Absence form available on the School's website
9. only request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances using the Leave of Absence form available on the School's website
10. provide the School with up to date contact numbers and details of any change of address

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean that an absence is or will be authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Head teacher.

The School will:

1. have in place an admission register containing the personal details of every pupil in the School, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School,

information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended by the pupil

2. notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil (except where the pupil is registered at the start of Year 7)
3. closely monitor its pupils' attendance
4. keep an accurate record of attendance that is regularly updated and regularly reviewed
5. preserve entries in the admission and attendance registers for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made
6. make contact with parents on the first day of absence when a pupil has failed to attend School without explanation
7. take steps to monitor lateness, and take appropriate action to combat persistent lateness
8. keep at the forefront that attendance issues may indicate safeguarding concerns and will at all times follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. The School will refer specific attendance issues to pastoral staff and supporting agencies where appropriate

Tutors will:

1. take a register of attendance at the start of each school session, using the computerised system, ensuring that a mark is entered for every pupil
2. ensure that all information they receive about a pupil's absence (in advance or after an absence) is passed on to the attendance team.
3. inform the School's office staff of any change of contact details
4. inform the Head of Year and relevant pastoral staff of home/personal circumstances which affect a pupil's attendance
5. be aware of the attendance of pupils in their tutor group and liaise with the Education Welfare Officer and Head of Year regarding concerns
6. reward pupils each half term with a Pace Point if they achieve 98% attendance

7. discuss attendance with pupils during their mentoring sessions, if attendance falls below 95% (or 90% during Term 1), recording details of the meeting in the Intervention Log in Class Charts

### **Encouraging attendance**

The School encourages full attendance at School by:

- implementing the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards, and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance
- delivering a clear and consistent message to parents and pupils about the importance of good attendance
- encouraging parents to fully support this Attendance policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education. All new parents will be introduced to this Attendance policy and information on attendance in the School's prospectus, and via the School's website
- encouraging pupils to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality
- setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with parents and pupils
- accurately completing registers throughout the School day using the correct codes for absence via the SIMs registration system, and ensuring that absences are followed up promptly
- communicating effectively with other agencies, including Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire Local Authority, Health and Social Services
- ensuring that all staff at the School comply with this Attendance policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- having procedures in place to help pupils settle in after a long absence, including ensuring the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to other pupils
- making every effort to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEND

### **Challenging poor attendance**

The School responds to non-attendance by:

- treating pupils who are looked after, subject to a Child Protection Plan, or are Children in Need with the highest priority and making them known to the Education Welfare Officer and Deputy Head Teacher. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home and any outside professionals who are working with the pupil and/or their family will be notified. Pupils with special educational needs will be treated with a similar priority
- contacting parents on each and every day of absence. If no reasonable explanation for the absence is provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- investigating patterns of non-attendance, seeking support from parents and external agencies, where appropriate
- liaising with parents to discuss the attendance issues and look to agree a way forward

- implementing the Attendance Monitoring and Intervention Strategy set out at Appendix 1
- implementing sanctions for late registration in accordance with the staged approach outlined below:
  - if a pupil is late for morning or afternoon registration or two occasions in a week, they will be put on or moved up a stage. The stages are reset at the beginning of terms 1, 3 and 5:
    - Stage 1 Head of Year lunchtime detention (no letter)
    - Stage 2 Head of Year lunchtime detention (letter sent home)
    - Stage 3 30 minute afterschool detention with Head of Year
    - Stage 4 1 hour afterschool detention with Head of Year
    - Stage 5 1.5 hour Senior Management afterschool detention
    - Stage 6 1 day in internal exclusion

## **Types of Absence**

### **Authorised**

Authorised absence is where following communication from the pupil's parents, the School accepts that there is a good reason for a pupil to be absent from School.

Examples of the types of absence that may be authorised include:

- absence due to illness or other unavoidable cause
- an absence for religious observance to which the family belongs
- transportation issues and the School is not within walking distance
- situations where the School authorises absence

Please note, only the School can authorise a pupil's absence, and the School is under no obligation to accept at face value the explanation offered as a valid reason for non-attendance.

Any pupil whose parent does not provide an acceptable reason for their absence will be deemed to have truanted, and the School reserves the right to issue a sanction and shall record the absence as unauthorised.

### **Unauthorised**

Unauthorised absence is any absence which cannot be justified by reference to one of the above examples, or where a pupil's parent has failed to provide an explanation for the pupil's absence. This includes where a pupil has arrived at the School too late to get a present mark without a justifiable reason.

The School can, if necessary, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence, and vice versa, if new information is presented (for example, where a parent states that a child has been unwell but there is subsequent evidence that they have been on holiday).

### **Leave during term time (including holidays)**

In accordance with their obligations under this policy, parents should avoid arranging any holidays during term time as these will not be authorised, unless the Head teacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.

If a parent wants to take a child out of school for a holiday or for any other reason, they must use the Leave of Absence form available from the School's Reception or on the School's website.

The Head teacher will only authorise planned term-time absence in exceptional circumstances. If a parent takes a child on an unauthorised holiday during term time, the School will make a referral to the Local Authority and a penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child out of school, without warning.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from School for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the pupil has a valid performance licence, and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence.

Parents of pupils with a talent for sport can seek leave of absence from School for the child to take part in a regional, county, national, or international event or competition. The Education Welfare Officer has discretion to authorise leave of absence. Permission to arrive late or leave to attend coaching and training sessions are unlikely to be authorised unless the sports club or association are providing an education plan as part of their coaching.

### **Children missing from education**

Where children go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The School's procedures for dealing with children who go missing from education are referred to the Local Authority who will perform checks which are not available to the School.

Where reasonably possible, the School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil to provide the School with additional options to make contact with a responsible adult particularly when a child missing from education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

The School will report to the Local Authority a pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent from school without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more. Pupils who were allocated a place at the School but fail to start will be treated as Children Missing from Education.

### **Contact details and school records**

To ensure that the School is able to contact parents in an emergency and about other important matters, including absence from school, we must have contact telephone numbers and contact details. Parents are expected to notify the School in the event of contact details changing (such as moving house or changing telephone number).

Reviewed by: Community and Wellbeing

Date: July 2022

Next review: July 2024



## Appendix 1

### Attendance Monitoring and Intervention Strategy

#### Initial Concern

When a pupil's attendance falls below 95% (or 93% in term 1) the pupils tutor will discuss attendance concerns with the pupils during their 1:1 mentoring session

When attendance falls below 93% (or 90% in term 1), a letter will be sent by the Education Welfare Officer to the pupil's parents and there will be a review period of 4 weeks. Where there have been 4 or more unauthorised absences, or attendance falls below 90%, during the review period, the pupil will be progressed to stage 1.

#### Stage 1

A letter is sent to the pupil's parents by the Education Welfare Officer. A Pupil Attendance Agreement will be agreed between the pupil and the Education Welfare Officer or Head of Year. There will be a review period of 4 – 6 weeks. If during the review period there are 4 or more unauthorised absences, or attendance falls below 90%, the pupil will be progressed to stage 2.

#### Stage 2

A letter is sent to the pupil's parents by the Education Welfare Officer, who will arrange a home visit and/or a meeting with the pupil's parents in the School. Medical evidence will be required to authorise any further absence due to illness. There will be a review period of 4-6 weeks. If during the review period there are 4 or more unauthorised absences, or attendance falls below 90%, and/or pre-arrange home visits are unsuccessful, the pupil will be progressed to stage 3.

#### Stage 3

A letter is sent to the pupil's parents from the Educational Welfare Officer inviting them to an Attendance Improvement Meeting. The first review will be carried out in 4-6 weeks. A total of 28 or more unauthorised absences or 20 continuous unauthorised absences will result in the pupil moving to stage 4.

#### Stage 4

A referral will be made to the Local Authority and a request for legal proceedings to be commenced against the parents will be made.

A pupil can be placed on any of the above stages without having moved from stage to stage, depending upon need. A pupil does not need to have been placed on all stages of the procedure before a referral is made to the Local Authority.