



Kent Health Needs Education Service

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Name of Policy | Attendance |
| Document owner | Carla Walmsley |
| Document issued/last reviewed | June 2021 |
| Date for review | May 2023 |
| Additional notes | Contains information reflecting the change in timing for the PM register. PM register will be taken at 12.05pm. |
| Number of pages | 20 |

Statement of Intent

Kent Health Needs Education Service (KHNES) is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils, and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The management, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at KHNES.

As pupils are dual rolled with our service, we work closely with Home Schools in order to monitor and inform them with regards to attendance.

Parental/Carer Responsibility

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child, and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents'/carers responsibility to contact the school every day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 08:45 am. All pupils that arrive late must report with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

Attendance and KHNES

At KHNES there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers and Hub Managers have overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Hub Managers or Teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Hub Managers/Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher will notify the Hub Manager of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Hub Managers to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- Pupils part time timetables are available to all staff via the T:drive
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on each day of absence by phone call – specific details (including symptoms and presentation) regarding the absence and times of calls must be logged on the pupils' record within SIMS including a descriptive comment.
Note it is not acceptable for parents to send in emails unless there is an emergency situation e.g. hospital admission. Nor is it acceptable for pupil to telephone and notify KHNES of their absence.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed termly of the child's attendance figure
- Pupil part time timetables are reviewed every week and recorded using the documentation in appendix 13.
- Attendance reports are sent to home schools on a weekly basis to ensure attendance coding is consistent, this should be done using KLZ secure to ensure GDPR compliance.
- Once a pupil is placed on roll with KHNES the hub manager will contact and inform the relevant county A&I team

During termly Quality Assurance (QA) attendance data is collated across the service and used to inform KHNES and associated stakeholders about areas to improve and develop effective practice across the service. The QA document will also identify pupil's average baseline attendance at their home-school compared to attendance at KHNES. In doing this, the service will be able to see if there are improvements in attendance, even if the overall percentage for attendance appears lower than national averages.

Due to the nature of the students attending KHNES there is a strong likelihood that attendance at their home school has been an issue. With this in mind, students will have an initial meeting with the Hub Manager where attendance to the service will be highlighted as a vital component of school life. At this initial meeting appropriate timetables will be set to facilitate the student's integration into education at KHNES.

Children are expected to attend their service provision for as many of the 190 days of the academic year as their health allows. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. Student attendance figures are calculated according to their individual timetables. Timetables are personalised to meet the needs of the students and attendance should reflect the agreed timetable of attendance.

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

As a number of our pupils are on agreed part time timetables due to their health need attendance monitoring is analysed using proportionate percentages. Hence if a pupil is only able to attend afternoon sessions every week and does so, their attendance will be recorded as 100% for that week. Our expectation as a Service is that pupils should attend for 95% of their agreed timetable. If the timetable needs to be adapted, then this can be done on consultation with medical professionals. Where timetables are reduced Hub Managers must ensure that KCC are notified through the digital front door.

Where proportionate attendance falls below the 95% benchmark the following action is required;

- 97 - 100% attendance – the Hub Manager to investigate and notify The Assistant Headteacher of concerns. Hub Manager to contact parent/carer if appropriate, medical vidence will be requested where appropriate particularly if a pattern is forming that causes concern.
- Below 95% attendance – Attendance warning/monitoring letter sent
- Below 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents. Input from medical clinicians will also be sought where illness is a factor.

- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the Home School roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service where appropriate. Please see the circumstances below: -

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed; this also corresponds with the 10 day safeguarding practice. In the first instance advice will be sought by KHNES from the Attendance and Inclusion Service. This may result in the completion of a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances: -

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area, but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

10 Day Safeguarding practice:

Pupil attendance is monitored closely to ensure that all pupils are seen by a KHNES member of staff or other professional within a 10-school day window. Visits will not be recorded as present marks in the register as the pupil has not attended the provision. A note however should be made on SIMs to state the time of the visit, the member of staff and a summary of the circumstances/details.

If a child's whereabouts can not be ascertained or there are any concerns attendance and inclusion will be contacted in the first instance to discuss whether a CME referral needs to be completed. All CME's must be recorded on the KHNES records and incident tracker and should only be completed with the authority of a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Electively Home Educated pupils

On receipt of written notification to home educate, KHNES will inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. KHNES will not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record. KHNES will also liaise with the pupils' home school.

Schools and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home.

Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education, but this does not have to be at a school

Lateness

At KHNES the register is taken at 08:45 am and 12:05 pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

Due to the use of part time timetables a pupil will only be recorded as late where appropriate to their timetable.

Pupils arriving after their agreed time will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include: -

- Attendance Improvement Meeting

- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)

Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)

Appendix 3 Absence Letter

Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter

Appendix 5 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral

Appendix 6 Unauthorised absence confirmation of PN request

Appendix 7a Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)

Appendix 7b Response to Leave Request submitted retrospectively (Not Authorising)

Appendix 8 Unauthorised leave confirmation of PN request

Appendix 9 School letter where they believe a holiday was taken

Appendix 10 Notice of closure to Service due to non-engagement/attendance

Appendix 11 Summary of letters and action points

Appendix 12 School Referral Pathway

Appendix 13 Part time timetable Hub weekly review sheet

Appendix 1

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates_of_lates_before»

Total number of lates before registration closed: «total_lates_before»

half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **08:45** am and at **12:05** pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can increase anxiety on entering classes already engaged in the lesson.

I would like use to work together to improve punctuality, if we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Hub Manager

Appendix 2

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates_of_lates_after»

Total number of lates after registration closed: «total_lates_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **08:45** am and is closed at **09:00** am for the morning session and taken again at **12:05** pm and closed at **12:55** pm for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Hub Manager

Appendix 3

Attendance Letter 1

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. [His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 90% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away, but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I would like for us to work together to improve «forename»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Hub Manager

Appendix 4

Attendance Letter 2

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname»

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school. [His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage].

As there has been no improvement in «forename»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different, and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

I therefore request that you attend a meeting to discuss the above. Please contact the hub office as soon as possible in order to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Where appropriate KHNES will also discuss this matter with the Attendance and Inclusion service who have the statutory duty to investigate matters of ongoing poor school attendance.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Headteacher

Appendix 5

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

'As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Headteacher

Appendix 6

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

With reference to our letter dated ??, «forename» has now reached a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result, we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Headteacher

Appendix 7a

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time

For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request, but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Goode
Executive Headteacher

Appendix 7b

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time
For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively, and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Goode
Executive Headteacher

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Name: «forename» «surname» DOB: «date_of_birth»

With reference to our letter dated ??date, the leave of absence taken between ??date and ??date has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Goode
Executive Headteacher

Appendix 9

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. ***(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)***

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Goode
Executive Headteacher

Appendix 10

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

RE: Final Notice before Closure

At the time of writing, your son's/daughter's attendance with our service is at xxxxxx which includes xx sessions recorded as unauthorised absence. The minimum expectation of attendance is xx%.

To date, the Kent Health Needs Education Service, Canterbury Hub, have attempted the following strategies to reengage your son with our service:

- Reduced timetable (multiple times)
- Organisation of transport (multiple times)
- Every day calling
- Offered in hub strategies, such as independent work stations
- Attendance letters
- Proposed attendance meetings (which went unattended)

I am requesting your attendance for a meeting on xxxxxxxx at our xxxxxxxx Hub. If you are unable to make that date, please contact our office to inform them of a date when you can by xxxxxxxx. If you cannot travel to the xxxxxxxx Hub, please contact our office and inform them of a date when you can accept a home visit for the meeting to be held there, by xxxxxxxx.

Be aware that should you not attend the meeting this will result in an immediate closure and discharge of your son/daughter from our service. In the meeting, I will be setting strict criteria to be met for your child to continue to engage in our service. Should these criteria not be met, this will result in an immediate closure of your child from our service. Invitations will also be sent to other stakeholders, including the home school and the medical professionals involved in your son's/daughter's care.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Head Teacher
Kent Health Needs Education Service

Appendix 11

Summary of Letters and action points:

| Letter | Appendix code | When to action | Signatory |
|--|----------------------|---|---|
| Late warning before registration closes | A1 | 10 or more Lates | Hub Manager |
| Late warning after registration closes | A2 | 10 or more Lates | Hub Manager |
| Attendance warning letter | A3 | When proportionate attendance drops below 95% | Hub Manager |
| Attendance Meeting letter | A4 | When proportionate attendance drops below 90%. Medical input to also be sought at this point. | Assistant Headteacher |
| Unauthorised absence warning | A5 | When 5 days or 10 session threshold reached | Hub Manager |
| Unauthorised absence penalty notice | A6 | When unauthorised threshold is exceeded i.e. 5 days or 10 sessions | Assistant Headteacher |
| Responding to requests for leave | A7a/A7b | Declining a holiday request | Executive Headteacher |
| Action when holiday already taken | A8/A9 | When Holiday already taken without prior application | Executive Headteacher |
| Final notice of closure | A10 | When there is no engagement from the family, pupil is not attending and all other professionals have been consulted. | Assistant Headteacher only with authorisation following re-referral to panel |

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance



