

Kempshott Junior School Attendance and Absence Policy

Policy Ratified by Governing Body	13 th March 2024	Review Annually
Date of Review	Spring Term 2024	
Date of Next Review	Spring Term 2025	

Safeguarding Statement:

At Kempshott Junior School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Kempshott Junior School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

As it is a legal requirement that pupils attend school regularly, attendance records are **monitored** regularly in the following ways:-

- The Teaching staff note absence patterns and frequency when taking the register and mention to the Office where it is followed up by a letter to the parents.
- A member of the Office Staff checks the registers each morning and follows up unexplained absences with a phone call to parents or a person with parental responsibility.
- Leave of Absence forms are completed by parents and submitted to the Head Teacher for review.
- Various forms and reports record authorised and unauthorised absences.

Encouragement of Attendance is Carried out by:-

- Weekly analysis of class attendance with house points given to the class with the best attendance that week and the same for the house with the best attendance. The class with the highest attendance of the half term has a class reward.
- Half termly reviews are made of attendance and children with attendance of less than 95% will be sent a letter.
- Contacting parents when their child's attendance shows signs of becoming a concern to discuss the issue and find ways to improve the situation.
- A letter from County is issued as notification that they are approaching 10 sessions absence within 100 days, which may result in a fine from HCC.
- Children may be on a reduced timetable (e.g. morning sessions only) this is approved by HCC and for a set period of time.
- Children with plaster casts/ slings/crutches etc. are welcomed back into the school as soon as their Doctor considers it appropriate.
- The Welcome Pack and the School Website explains to the parents:-
 - how to notify the school of absences
 - when an absence is unauthorised
 - how to gain permission for absences other than illness, appointments etc.
- Lateness is monitored by the Class Teacher and the Office staff by seeing who has to come into the school via the front entrance once the doors are closed and by entries in the Register
- Unexplained absences are followed up with a letter to remind parents of the need for an explanation and asking for one for the dates stated.

Legal Measures for Tackling Persistent Absence or Lateness

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Kempshott Junior School and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

- The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance.
- The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence (codes G, U or O on the register).

Issuing Penalty Charge Notices for Unauthorised Absence

Since September 2015 it has become Hampshire County Council policy to issue a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) for unauthorised absence, this will happen if the following criteria is met:

- If your child is absent for 5 or more school days (10 sessions) for the purposes of a family holiday or family days out. These do not need to be consecutive but will have to take place within a 10 week period (codes G, U or O on the register)
- If your child is persistently late after the close of the register, 9.20am, for 10 sessions.
- If your child is persistently late before the close of the register, between 8.45 and 9.20am. Meeting with parents will take place before a PCN would be issued to resolve any on-going problems.
- If your child is absent due to a family holiday during the SAT's examinations. These dates will be published in advance on our website

If you wish to take your child out of school for the purposes of a family holiday, the form "***Request to Authorise Absence from School Due to Exceptional Circumstances***" must be completed and submitted to the Head Teacher. This form is available on our website and from the School Office. Please note that a family holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Once signed and returned by the Head Teacher, if the absence is not authorised, the form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning that if the child is absent during the requested dates and providing it is for 5 full school days (10 sessions) or more a PCN will be issued via Hampshire County Council without further notice to the parents.

Hampshire County Council have confirmed that Head Teachers are not permitted to authorise family holidays during term time under any circumstances. Head Teachers have the power of discretion over approval of absence other than that of a family holiday and all requests for leave will be given due consideration.

This is in line with the Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996 Section 444A

Registration is entered into the Arbor database. The marks are made accordingly and in line with current legislation.

Extraordinary Circumstances e.g. COVID-19 Pandemic

In the event of a national or international crisis, which will directly affect children's attendance at school, using a pandemic as an example, Hampshire County Council have issued the following guidance:

Children will not be penalised for non-attendance at school during such circumstances, authorised absence codes have been issued to cover

- Government attendance restrictions

- Schools closed due to a national or regional lockdown
- Self-isolation due to internal and external exposure
- Shielding
- Quarantine Requirements

If a child is shielding for medical purposes, a letter from the G.P must be provided.

Current guidance regarding issuing Penalty Charge Notices for families who are abroad during a lockdown scenario and their return delayed, is that no charge will be issued. This is subject to change.

Where it is suspected that a family is abusing the situation, an investigation of the circumstances of the child's absence will be carried out.