



King David Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

The 1996 Education Act places a duty on parents to ensure that their child/children receive an education.

“If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”

This could lead to a fine and a criminal record.

A ‘parent’ includes any person who is not a parent, but who has parental responsibility for him / her, or who has care of them, e.g.

- Absent parents – must have regular contact and ability to influence the child including their attendance.
- Parental partners (whether they are married or not / natural parent or not, as long as they have ‘are of’ the child).
- Grandparents or older sibling with whom the child lives as their main carer.

Aims of this policy

In striving to enable each child to reach their full potential, King David Primary School stresses the importance to both children and parents of the need for maximum attendance and punctuality.

King David Primary School’s expectations and responsibilities:

Pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive in a fit condition to learn.

Above 94% attendance and will investigate all absenteeism.

School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness. We will work closely with parents should attendance / punctuality give cause for concern.

Pupils:

Pupils will ensure that they attend regularly and on time.

Pupils will have individual records of attendance / punctuality acknowledged by the school.

Parents:

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly, punctually and are properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for informing the school as early as possible of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit). Parents are required to complete a Request for Authorised Absence. If any absence is required. Authorisation of holidays may only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

School times –

Nursery	8:50am – 12:25pm	Monday – Friday mornings
	1:20pm – 3:15pm	Monday – Thursday afternoons
	1:20pm – 2:15pm	Friday afternoons

Reception and Upper Phase (Y4, Y5, Y6)

	8:45am – 12:25pm	Monday – Friday mornings
	1:20pm – 3:25pm	Monday – Thursday afternoons
	1:20pm – 2:15pm	Friday afternoons

Middle Phase (Y1, Y2, Y3)

8:45am – 12pm

1pm – 3:25pm

1pm – 2:15pm

Monday – Friday mornings

Monday – Thursday afternoons

Friday afternoons

School Absence Procedures:

- First day telephone call
- Sending a letter
- Children with a Safeguarding vulnerability
- Signs of Safety and Wellbeing - voice of the child
- Informal meeting – parental voice
- Home visit
- Request for medical evidence
- Time limited interventions

Some children need encouragement to attend school regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. It is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may seek help using either the Birmingham Safeguarding routes to helping families, including but not exclusively, seeking help using Early Help procedures from the local authority to seek further professional help.

<http://www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk/early-help/early-help>

Authorising absence

All absences must be explained by a parental note or message. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence. All absence-related messages received by any member of staff will be conveyed to the school office. If no information from home is forthcoming, the school office will contact the child's parents. The school office will pay particular attention to the possibility of unauthorised absence and take action if this is suspected.

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following exceptional circumstances:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

PROOF OF UNAVOIDABLE REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, E.G. MEDICAL EVIDENCE AND / OR TRAVEL DOCUMENTS WILL BE REQUIRED.

If travelling to another location, an address of the intended location for where the child will be is necessary and at least two contact telephone numbers are required. This will be necessary if we need to contact the police.

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents (an exception to this might be where a child is looking after a disabled parent)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Holidays unless exceptional circumstances (Holidays being cheaper, or difficulty getting time from work, would not be considered an exceptional reasons)
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

Parental requests for authorised absence in term time

When asking for absence to be authorised, parents must complete an Absence Request Form in advance from the school office or school website. Such absences from school are discouraged, and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. School will always put the education of the child first when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

Fines for unauthorised absence

It is Birmingham City Council policy to issue Penalty Notices or fines for unauthorised absence.

RATIONALE:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 (the Act), states that the parent of a child of compulsory school age has a legal duty to ensure that they receive an efficient full-time education suitable to their child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. Therefore, in order to ensure that parents comply with this duty, and to ensure that children and young people are able to maximise the opportunities available to them via regular attendance at school, Birmingham City Council (the Local Authority) will support schools to challenge irregular school attendance using the powers outlined in this Code of Conduct. Section 444A of the Act states that, if it is believed that a child has failed to attend school regularly and the parent is therefore guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Act:

- a Penalty Notice may be issued for £60, if it is paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice;
- rising to £120, if it is paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt; and
- non-payment will entitle the Local Authority to prosecute the parent for the original offence, under section 444(1) of the Act.

These Penalty Notices, which can result in a criminal record, can be issued for unauthorised absence within term time from school when the circumstances appear to have been avoidable, (e.g. child too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting, recurrent lateness).

However this is to be used as a last resort, and its purpose should always be borne in mind. The school holds the option of issuing Penalty Notices, in order to influence and change parental behaviour, reducing the incidences of parents taking their children out of school unnecessarily, rather than simply to punish. Before penalty notices are used, due consideration will be given to whether this is likely to alter parental behaviour in a positive way.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

1. Attendance:

When:

- a pupil has had a minimum of 20 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months;
- a school or place of alternative educational provision has commenced the relevant Local Authority legal intervention process and

- despite that process being followed by the school, there has been little improvement in the pupil's attendance.

2. Unauthorised Leave in Term Time:

When:

- a pupil has been taken on an unauthorised "leave of absence" from school or a place of alternative educational provision for minimum of 10 school days in term time, or;
- a pupil has had a minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months and has then been taken on an unauthorised leave of absence from school or a place of alternative provision for a minimum 5 school days; and
- the school or place of alternative educational provision have followed the relevant Local Authority legal intervention process, a penalty notice may be issued.

To avoid Legal Action being taken against you for failing to ensure your child/ren attend school regularly, you are advised of the following:

- Ensure your child attends school every day it is open, on time, escorting them into school if necessary and handing them over to a member of staff. **(Please be aware your child will get an unauthorised absence mark when they arrive after registration closes).**
- Contact school on the **first day of every absence** by **9.30am** stating the reason for absence and the likely return date.
- Take your child to the doctor if unwell and provide the school with: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work?

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of 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

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006. ***Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.***

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Legal action that may be taken includes:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern, the school will offer advice and support to improve attendance. After this, any unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.

Please see appendix A at the end of this policy – Birmingham Local Authority letter to all parents regarding the legalities of school age attendance. This will be sent out on a needs basis, to parents who may be subject to a penalty notice due to their children's patterns and/or history of absence.

Legally we are not allowed to change any aspect of this letter apart from adding our Headteacher's name.

Lateness

We at King David School believe that all children should arrive promptly before the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. It is important for children to be encouraged to learn, from an early age, that good punctuality is important.

Children, who arrive on time, start the day able to socialise with their friends and have time to settle into school. Those who do not arrive promptly often feel unsettled and miss the initial introduction to the day.

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving after the closure of the registers, unless for an authorised reason, is counted as an unauthorised absence.

Regular reminders about the need for punctuality are sent to parents in specific letters and in newsletters. The security, well-being and education of your children is paramount to all of us. Nursery staff have identified some issues which could be improved in order to ensure that these remain the focus of the staff while your child is in our care.

Collection of children at the close of school

Parents are also reminded to collect their children on time. Children not collected on time have to wait in the entrance hall. No children are allowed to wait, for long, in the playground after school hours. Children not collected on time are brought to the entrance hall by a member of staff. Children are not allowed to move away from their class teacher until an adult has arrived to collect them. In Nursery, Reception and Year 1, children are “handed over” from the staff member to the collecting adult. In older year-groups, children are trusted to go to the appropriate adult without a handover. They are taught in lessons about “stranger danger” and the importance of taking responsibility for their personal safety. Parents are requested not to ask their children to wait outside the school gates.

A member of staff will wait in the entrance hall with remaining children and release them as their parent arrives. Ten minutes after the close of school, a list of remaining children is given to the office, who then contacts the parents by phone, if possible, to ascertain the collection arrangements for their child. Once the office has been given this list, no child is to be released without first informing the office.

Parents of children who continually collect their child late are approached personally by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and asked to ensure they collect their children promptly.

As a last resort, if children have not been collected, they may be escorted, by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, to the nearest place of safety, for instance, a local Police Station.

Publication of attendance data

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. You will receive information regarding your child’s attendance in his/her annual report. All schools are also required to submit, termly, attendance information to the LA for inclusion in local comparative tables of school performance. Attendance statistics are also used by Ofsted in forming judgements about the school.

Attendance awards

Each week, classes with the best attendance and punctuality for that week are rewarded with certificates in the Friday afternoon Kiddush assembly.

Nursery

Nursery education is non-statutory and regular attendance cannot be legally enforced. However, the school feels that it is important to promote regular attendance patterns in the Nursery, so that these will continue in primary school. Parents should be aware that low attendance in the Nursery might jeopardise their child’s place. Punctuality and regular attendance are very important with regard to the progress of children.

Late to nursery drop off in the morning:

If you are late to bring your child to nursery, it takes away a member of staff from their teaching group in the morning to answer the door. They also then have to spend more time to fill in late registers and change the dinner numbers, which all takes time away from delivering the curriculum. Obviously, it would be best if all parents could bring their children to Nursery on time for 8.50am but we recognise that this is not always possible.

If you are late and the nursery door is locked, please follow this new procedure:

1. Go to the main school office with your child.
2. Explain you are late and the reason.
3. The office staff will then fill in a slip for you to hand to Nursery staff, so that both know the attendance register and the dinner register have been updated.

Early collection from nursery:

If you need to pick up your child early from school, please follow this procedure:

1. Go directly to the school office and explain why you need to pick up your child early.
2. You will be given a slip to hand to the Nursery to say that you have been to the office. This will let Nursery staff know that the attendance and dinner register (if necessary) have been changed.
3. You can then go to pick up your child from Nursery, handing the slip to the Nursery staff.

You will be redirected to the main office if you try to drop your child off or pick them up without going to the office first. The slip will indicate that you have been there. We appreciate that you will want to work with the school to ensure the continued safety and education of your child.

Summary

Current legislation places a responsibility on parents, schools and the LA to ensure children receive an efficient and suitable full-time education. The school has a duty to make your child's time at school interesting and worthwhile and parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The King David School is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. The suggestions of parents and children about how to encourage attendance are especially welcome.



King David
Primary School

School Attendance

A very important message for all Parents/Carers

Dear Parent/Carer,

King David Primary School is working in partnership with parents and the Local Authority to improve school attendance. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
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Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children

with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

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Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



Lead Attendance Officer



Education Legal Intervention Team
Alternative Provision, Attendance,
and Independent Education Service
Birmingham City Council