



# King David Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### **Introduction**

The 1944 Education Act places a duty on parents to ensure that their child/children receive an education. The King David School encourages a commitment to attendance without undue absence. Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school on a regular basis so that they can take advantage of all the many and varied opportunities provided.

Children should come to school every day. They should only be absent if the reason is “unavoidable”. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be fined. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either *authorised* or *unauthorised*. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a good reason: illness or other unavoidable causes. The Headteacher may exercise discretion to authorise absence on other grounds, e.g. death of a close member of the family, medical or dental appointments, which can not be attended outside school hours.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes keeping children off school for trivial reasons; truancy; absences, which have never been properly explained, and children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not “unavoidable”. Except in cases where the pupil is sick, only the Headteacher can authorise absence. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house or as a treat.

Persistent lateness can have a cumulating effect and deny full access to the national curriculum. It can be classed as failure to attend regularly (s.39 Education Act 1944). Being late once a week will be considered as persistent lateness in these circumstances and the Headteacher will consider the cause of action.

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 refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the local education authority. The role of the EWO is to help parents and the LA meet their statutory obligations on attendance. He or she will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement, but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents of children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask their advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

### **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	Monday – Friday mornings
	1pm – 3:25pm	Monday – Thursday afternoons
	1pm – 2:15pm	Friday afternoons

Pupils should arrive at school in time for the bell at 8:45am. Morning registration for Middle and Upper phases is at 8:50am. Children are marked late if they arrive after 8:50am but before the close of registers at 9:10am. If they arrive after 9:10am, they are marked absent for that session. Afternoon registration is at 1.20pm for Foundation Stage, 1pm for the Middle Phase and 1.25pm for Upper Phase. If the children arrive after the close of afternoon registration, they are marked absent for that session.

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.

### **Illness and other legitimate reasons**

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school in person before 10:30am, or by telephone between 9am and 10:30am, on the first day of absence. Parents will be asked when the pupil is expected to be able to return to school. If the school is not informed of reasons for the absence, parents can expect to be contacted at some point on the first day of absence.

When the child returns, he or she must bring a written note signed by a parent. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time in advance. Leave may be granted for medical appointments, which are unavoidable in school time, provided a written request is received in advance. The school must be advised as soon as possible in emergency situations, e.g. bereavement or other exceptional traumatic event.

### **Holidays**

Under guidance from the Department for Education, leave to take holidays in term time is not permitted, except in exceptional circumstances determined on a case-by-case basis. Parents should consider carefully the implications for their child when school is missed. Tuition in vital areas of the National Curriculum may be missed.

### **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.

Children who are late enter the school through the main entrance door. Their names are written in the late book. At the end of each week, parents of persistently late pupils are reminded of the need for punctuality and are asked to ensure their child arrives promptly in future. If the problem persists, the Headteacher will take further action, which may include contacting external agencies, e.g. the Education Welfare Service.

At the end of each week, the classes with the best attendance and punctuality receive certificates.

### **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. Fifteen 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, Kings Heath 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.

### **Following up non-attendance**

The school uses a computerised registration system, which allows the school to monitor absence and lateness so that appropriate action can be taken where necessary. If the school is not contacted by 10:30am on the first day of absence, to explain that absence, then the clerical assistant will contact parents to establish reasons. Further contact will be established with parents if the lateness or

absences persist, or if there is doubt regarding authorised absence. The EWO will be advised if there is continuing concern.

### **Attendance awards**

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

### **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 high a level of attendance as possible. The suggestions of parents and children about how to encourage attendance are especially welcome.

# Absence and lateness of pupils - processes

## Absence

- In the case of foreseen absence, parents should write in advance informing the school. In some cases, for instance, family holidays, permission must be sought from the Headteacher.
- In the case of unforeseen absence, parents should contact the school before 10:30am on the first day of absence, with an estimate of when the child is expected to return to school.
- If no letter is received in advance, and there is no phone call, the office will call parents after 10:30am.
- On the first day that the child returns to school, they should bring a note explaining the absence in writing, and hand this note to their class teacher, who will store it in the register. This is required even if the parents have informed the school or the teacher verbally.
- The office will supply form letters for any children outstanding on the OMR absence report for the previous week, requesting a letter from the parents to explain the absence (assuming the child has returned to school). These letters go in the registers for teachers to hand to pupils. The office will supply repeat letters, if no reply has been received. If no reply is received by the Friday, when the new absence record sheets are produced, then the absence will be recorded as Unauthorised.
- If no explanation, or an unsatisfactory explanation, of the child's absence is received, then the absence will be recorded as Unauthorised. Such absences are reviewed by the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher, who may take further action.
- Every half-term, the clerical officer produces a report for the Headteacher, identifying any persistent or patterns of absence, and detailing actions that have been taken. The Headteacher will determine if further steps are required, e.g. requesting a meeting with parents to discuss the situation; referring to the Education Welfare Service.

## Lateness

- Pupils arriving late are recorded in the Late Book, by a member of teaching or support staff until 9am, and by the office after that. The explanation, e.g. dental appointment, is recorded in the Late Book.
- On a Friday, the office looks through the Late Book and sends a form letter home with children who were late more than once that week without good reason, noting how many times the child was late and reminding the parents of the school start-time. The letter should contain a tear-off slip for the parents to acknowledge receipt of the letter.
- If the office becomes aware of persistent or patterns of lateness, they will inform the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- Every half-term, the clerical officer produces a report for the Headteacher, identifying any persistent or patterns of lateness, and detailing actions that have been taken. The Headteacher will determine if further steps are required, e.g. requesting a meeting with parents to discuss the situation; referring to the Education Welfare Service.