



KENTISH TOWN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Excellent Teaching, Excellent Effort, Excellent Progress:
Every Child, Every Lesson, Every Day**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

A WORKING DOCUMENT FOR ALL OF US

Date of Policy: September 2025
Review: September 2026

Kentish Town CE Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

We want to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education to maximise opportunities for everybody to realise their potential. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the school community to strive for excellence and enjoyment in education. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and punctually.

At Kentish Town CE Primary School our objectives are to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers, and the wider community the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Regular and punctual attendance is **essential** for effective learning and children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please speak to us. The key contacts are at the end of this document and on our school website.

Attendance Target

Kentish Town CE Primary School intends to maintain its high levels of attendance each year. Our current target for 2024/25 is at least **96%**.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Minimum attendance targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

We will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling, and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the country.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Term dates

School term dates are published in advance and can be found on the school website. It is expected that all parents will take note of these dates and plan accordingly.

Whilst every effort is made for common term dates across the council, there are times that term dates may differ if you have children attending more than one school.

Please check the term dates on each school website and do not assume each school will have the same term dates.

They are also available from the school office and will be regularly highlighted in the school newsletter.

Staff training days (inset days) are included in the term dates schedule. Parents or carers will receive written notice of any changes in term dates. Those changes would also be published in the calendar on the school newsletter.

Please note that the Department for Education does **not** consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Why Regular Attendance is important:

1. Learning

We know from experience and from studies that regular absence and poor punctuality can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. When a pupil is absent or arrives late it disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning not only of that pupil but also that of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

2. Safeguarding

At Kentish Town CE Primary School, we believe every pupil should be able to learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. 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 and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from

education may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places your child at risk of harm.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and, within the context of this school, safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses:

Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

To allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.

It is also important for parents to let school know of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances. If you are uncertain about what would be considered a vulnerability, please speak with either the Deputy Head teacher or the Head teacher.

We will seek advice on attendance concerns from Attendance and Children Out of School and where appropriate we will seek consent to refer to other support services that can help support pupils and their families to improve attendance.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils, and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide parents / carers with details on attendance in the school newsletter.
- Report to parents at least termly on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and progress.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Telling the children about the importance of good attendance and punctuality

Children receive guidance from teachers on an individual, class and school level about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. If a child has concerns about their attendance or punctuality, they are encouraged to speak to their class teacher.

Children are encouraged to walk and cycle to school and to get to school on time before 9 am.

Children are encouraged to go to bed at an appropriate time so that they are not tired the next day. They are encouraged to prepare for the school day on the night before as much as possible, so they are not rushed in the mornings.

The school will endeavour to ensure that the school council is consulted with on an ongoing basis to help promote and develop initiatives to improve school attendance and punctuality.

The Law relating to attendance and safeguarding

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability, and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have either at school or otherwise

Compulsory School Age: A child is compulsory school age from the beginning of the next term after their 5th birthday until the last Friday of June in the academic year of their 16th birthday.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

This policy is written in relation to the following acts of Parliament and guidance relating to attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- We will also take account of all new legislation and initiatives.

Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why, information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is where the school has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical appointments - appointments should always be made outside school times where possible
- Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- Days of religious observance
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment

Unauthorised Absences

An unauthorised absence is where either no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is not considered acceptable by the school.

This includes:

- Parents / Carers keeping children off school to assist with translation
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a late mark – See lateness section
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

If an absence is recorded as unauthorised the school may refer this to the Local Authority's Pupil Attendance Service (PAS). The Local Authority can use various sanctions to promote regular attendance such as issuing a penalty notice fine or initiating court proceedings. (Further information below)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, it can sometimes be that they are reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers, and the child wherever possible. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism and Severe Absenteeism (PA and SA)

A pupil is a 'persistent absentee' (PA) if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

A pupil is "severely absent" if they miss 50% or more of their sessions across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that level, is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Absence at both these levels is causing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral support system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

If your child has reached, or is at risk of reaching, the threshold for Persistent Absence or Severe absence, you will be asked to provide evidence for any future absence. This may be medical evidence for illness which can be in the form of prescription, appointment cards, medicine packaging or hospital letter. Where we have concerns about your child's health, we may ask you to talk to the school nurse or to provide permission to contact their GP or other medical professionals for advice.

If this evidence is not provided, the absences will be unauthorised. Should a large number of unauthorised absences build up, this will result in a referral to the local authority and possibly a penalty notice being issued.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and give an expected return date. You need to call at least every second day thereafter to advise school of your child's progress.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who may arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Deputy/Headteacher if absences persist.
- Consult with the Attendance and Children Out of School if attendance moves below 95% and at least 10% or more of the absences are unauthorised.

Please see the school escalation table – appendix 1

The School Attendance Officer (SAO)

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems affecting or likely to affect attendance together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consult with the Pupil Attendance Service. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. They may also apply for an Education Supervision Order through the Family Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Pupil Attendance Service.

Other school staff who may deal with attendance are:

Grant Jacobson - Headteacher
Pamela Ansley - School Admin/Finance assistant.

The role of Governors

There is a School Governor (Ellie Besley-Gould) with responsibility for monitoring attendance and who is responsible for school attendance policies and issues. It is their role to be aware of general attendance issues and, along with the whole Governing Board, to inform and oversee school attendance performance initiatives. Reports and statistics and initiatives to improve school attendance will be shared and consulted on with the Governing Board and documented in Governors meeting minutes (made available to all parents).

The Headteacher's Role

The Headteacher will consider every request for leave on its individual merits. Ultimately the Headteacher will be the final arbiter of the authorisation of any leave.

The Headteacher oversees the collection and reporting of attendance data and the publication of statistics and reports on attendance to parents, pupils, governors and to Camden Council. Data is used to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohort who need it most. Data will also inform the annual review of the school's attendance policy and practice. Attendance data is reported to the Governing Board on a termly basis. This information is available to the local authority and the Department of Education (DfE)

The role of the attendance lead is to:

- Work with the headteacher to devise a working attendance policy, reviewed at regular intervals, and based on school attendance data.
- Monitor weekly attendance patterns and trends and identify whole school strategies and support for children who have missed school. They will also evaluate effectiveness of interventions and their impact on attendance levels.

- Be aware of those pupils the school is most concerned about, for example looked after children, children subject to safeguarding procedures, Children with EHCPs or other vulnerable children.
- Consult with Attendance and Children Out of School / other services as appropriate.
- Attend Targeted Support Meeting where appropriate.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The role of teachers

All class teachers have a responsibility in keeping an attendance register. This is a legal document and must be completed accurately. It is a legal requirement that the attendance register must be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Absences are coded according to the information received from the parent of the child.

Morning register should be completed by 9:00am
Afternoon register should be completed by 1:15pm

Where it is not possible to access the attendance management system manual registers should be returned to the attendance officer / school office by the above times.

The class teacher monitors the register daily and is encouraged to highlight any emerging patterns of absence and lateness or any alarming changes in this area.

Class teachers encourage patterns of punctuality and good attendance by praising those children who come to school each day and arrive on time.

The class teacher will:

- Report any concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality to the School Attendance lead and the Headteacher via My Concern or in person. This can sometimes then be referred to the LA if a Penalty Notice or legal action is being sought.
- Ensure that information about absences is passed on to the appropriate person.
- Welcome back pupils after an absence using positive language.

Legal sanctions and actions

The school will make every attempt to contact the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance we would invite them to discuss the problem unless the absence relates to leave in term time without permission. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education. A referral may be made to the LA under the following circumstances based on the national framework for penalty notices:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of ten sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period, which may span different terms or school years. This will include unauthorised absence for lateness Code U.
- A term time holiday taken without permission would count towards the ten sessions.
- A national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the third (or subsequent) offence(s) other legal prosecution will be considered.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent or carer for each of their children. For example, two parents with three children would receive a total of six penalty notices, one parent with two children will receive a total of two penalty notices.

From September 2024 each penalty notice is £80 if paid in the first 21 days, from day 22 the fine doubles to £160 for each penalty notice.

For the second offence issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the penalty notice is charged at a higher rate of £160 from day 1, with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

The Attendance and Children Out of School has asked us to point out that it is not possible to pay these fines by instalments or lower the cost when they have increased, or to simply fine one parent.

Payment can be made online and instructions on how to pay are included on the penalty notice letter. Any problems with paying online should be discussed as early as possible with the Attendance and Children Out of School by ringing 020 7974 1007.

If a penalty notice is not paid or the Attendance and Children Out of School feels that the level of absence warrants court action, the local authority will arrange for a court hearing. There are a range of sentencing options available to the magistrate including the maximum penalty of a fine of up to £2500 per parent for each offence as well as the possibility of up to three months in prison.

What happens after a long absence?

The school is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of pupils returning after significant periods of absence and will support the smooth reintegration of pupils both academically and socially. In such circumstances the school will work with parents, carers and pupil towards an agreed reintegration plan which may include opportunities for counselling and feedback, peer support and mentoring, along with an agreed review period.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information / instructions and news for the day. Late arriving pupils can also disrupt lessons, and this can be embarrassing for the child. This can encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **9:00 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. They should be in the classroom between **8:50 and 9am**.

Registers are marked by **9:00am** and your child will receive a 'late' mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9:10am** the registers will be closed. If your child arrives **after** that time, they will receive **an unauthorised absence mark** that shows them to be on site but **not** counted as a present for statistical / legal purposes. This means the possibility of a Penalty Notice(s) if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

The school day ends at 3.30 pm. Where parents continually fail to make arrangements to pick up their children at the end of the school day the school may have to consider referring the matter to **Social Services**, Early Help and/or Camden's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that s/he collect their children from school on time every day.

Exceptional Leave in Term Time

There is **no** entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Taking leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Remember that any monetary savings you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

All applications for a leave of absence **must** be made in advance to the Headteacher and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances. In deciding, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. The Headteacher will be the final arbiter as to the authorisation of any leave.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school.

Points to note:

- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or more than that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Your child's school place may also be at risk.
- Previous good attendance or your child's education ability are **not** considered when the school make the decision.
- If you have siblings at other schools you must seek permission from all the schools, and it is possible that one school may grant it, and another may not.
- Should either you or your child have a special educational need, this does **not** entitle you to a term time holiday. **Post Covid stress/mental health concerns do not entitle parents to a term time holiday.**

If exceptional leave is agreed you will receive a letter from the school. If you do not get a letter **DO NOT**, assume that permission has been granted. Only the headteacher can decide if they will grant exceptional leave – **no one else in school has permission to do so** and leaving an application form is not permission to take leave.

If leave has been granted and a child returns late outside of the agreed dates either before or after, the school will reserve the right to unauthorise the entire period of leave taken.

If parents have any comments, concerns, or complaints regarding the school attendance policy these can be addressed in writing to the Headteacher or an appointment can be arranged for discussion with the Headteacher.

If any parents wish to work with the school in partnership to promote and implement good school attendance practice this is encouraged and applauded. If a parent believes the school can support or assist them in their child's school attendance, we would be happy to accommodate this.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance and Children Out of School themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 0207 974 1653 or you can email acos@camden.gov.uk

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is vital that you keep school informed of any change of details and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a safeguarding matter.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Summary

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Grant Jacobson - Headteacher
Pamela Ansley-School Admin/Finance assistant.

Date of Policy: September 2025

Review: September 2026

Absence escalation day - table appendix 1

Absence	Action	Outcome
Day 1	If no reason received: first day contact – telephone call / text / email. (Remember to ask for expected return date and for regular updates if absence more than one day).	Parent provides acceptable reason – authorised absence (AA). Reason provided is unacceptable - unauthorised absence (UA) Unable to contact family – check if child is identified as vulnerable –refer to Attendance / Safeguarding Lead
Day 2	If no response at day 1 – repeat above – if no contact, then consider trying emergency contacts	If contact made – as above school decide if absence should be AA or UA. If no contact made refer to Attendance Lead & check with support staff / school friends, consider home visit.
Day 3	If no response at days 1 & 2. Carry out home visit. If parents have responded but absence is UA issue school waring letter	Home visit – if no response leave note – if appropriate check with neighbours (mindful of data protection). Parents provide evidence for absence then AA if don't UA
Day 4	If no contact from family or emergency contacts	Check with senior school to see if known and ask for advice. (??)
Day 5	If no contact from family or reason provided is unacceptable -issue school warning letter	Penalty Notice Warning to be considered.
Day 7	If no contact – home visit If contact but absence UA	No contact a) leave notes b) speak to neighbours c) checks with local authority. If continued UA refer to senior school staff for Penalty Notice Fine Children Out of School for Penalty Notice Fine (??)
Day 10	Continuous absence – no reason provided	Notify Local Authority/ Children Out of School for Penalty Notice Fine and continue to implement procedures to address absence

Please note schools should have letters for:

- 3-day absence without good reason – parents asked to respond in writing or telephone call – warn that they can be issued with penalty notice if no response
- 5-day absence without good reason – parents asked to respond in writing and provide evidence of reason for absence. Penalty Notice Warning can be sent.

If the child is considered to be vulnerable then this process needs to be escalated – always make sure you have a list of vulnerable children and who on SLT is the

appropriate contact for example the SENDCO or the Designated Safeguarding Lead who may have other pertinent information that requires home visit or action on the first day of absence.

Absence escalation percentage table

Percentage	Responsibility	Action
94% - 96%	School Action: Attendance Lead / Attendance Officer	Review attendance – consider is absence authorised (is it one period of absence of several individual days - look for patterns) If authorised may decide to monitor. If unauthorised – write to parents advising them of attendance level and of concerns / expectations and possible next actions.
91% - 94%	School Action	Review attendance – consider if authorised – is evidence being provided If unauthorised has it reached the threshold for Penalty Notice Warning. Is a home visit / school attendance panel appropriate?
90% or below	School Action + ACOS / other agencies where appropriate.	Review attendance – consider if absence is authorised – review reason and pattern. If child has a medical condition, is a referral to Medical Needs Service appropriate. If they are subject to a CP plan or other safeguarding concerns raised, then discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead / allocated Social Worker. If low attendance is authorised due to exclusions have all inclusion options been considered (primary may seek advice from the re-integration service)? Home visits should be made to ensure vital information is not missed. Consider absences using Emotional Based School Avoidance guidance.
		At less than 90% attendance a child is a Persistent Absentee and absence requires further investigation and possible statutory intervention depending on reason for absence. Long term illness should have been referred to Medical Needs Team; exclusions to School Inclusion Service.

Schools must notify the Local Authority of children who are absent for 10 consecutive days without authorisation. Email: acos@camden.gov.uk