



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## PURPOSE

The aims of the Attendance Policy are to raise the importance of good attendance in line with Ofsted requirements, ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently, to improve punctuality, promote opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils for attendance and punctuality achievements.

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Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Governors
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## POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Behaviour Model

## 1. Introduction and Government Guidance

All children of school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or any special need they may have.

Regular attendance is essential if a pupil is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

King Solomon Academy takes the responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils very seriously. It acknowledges that irregular attendance can disrupt continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement/low attainment and impedes the pupil's ability to develop friendship groups within the academy.

The whole academy community must take responsibility for attendance. Therefore, this policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of academy attendance are aware and informed.

This policy is consistent with the current DfE guidance's – [School attendance](#) and [Working together to improve school attendance](#). These guidance's gives clear rules around the use of absence codes, and these are adhered to fully by the school. These codes and the reasons for them are not listed here but can be seen in the government guidance. This guidance is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 2. Aims

The aims of the Attendance Policy are:

- a) To ensure pupil attendance is maximised for the benefit of pupils' education.
- b) Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded appropriately.
- c) To ensure parents requests for absence are dealt with consistently and fairly
- d) To ensure high levels of punctuality.
- e) Promote opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils for attendance and punctuality achievements.

## 3. Guidelines

### 3.1 Parents must inform the school if their child is absent

Parents and carers are asked to contact the academy by completing an [online form](#) if their pupil needs to be absent from the academy due to illness or to attend a [medical appointment](#) or an [Exceptional Leave of Absence](#) form for other absence. Parents can also call or come to the academy office to report absence if they are unable to complete the form.

### 3.2 Guidance on Authorised absences

Acceptable reasons include sickness, appointments, exceptional reasons such as recognised religious holidays. Medical appointments (including dentist and hospital appointments) should be arranged outside of the academy day, if possible. Where this is not possible the

pupil should miss as little of the day as possible e.g. by coming into school for the first part of the day or returning to school after an appointment.

### 3.3 Guidance on Unauthorised absences

Unacceptable reasons include shopping, going to an appointment, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent/carer unwell and taking holiday, for example by acquiring cheaper flights outside of academy holidays. Absence will also be unauthorised if the reason is not provided.

Absence is unauthorised in any of the following circumstances:

- When a pupil has arrived more than 30 minutes after the register has closed in the morning
- When a parent has submitted an Exceptional Leave of Absence request which has not been approved by the school
- When a parent has taken their child out of school for a reason other than illness without submitting an Exceptional Leave of Absence request
- When a parent has not properly notified the school of a pupil's absence
- When a pupil has been absent for four or more days in a row and no evidence has been provided by a doctor (e.g. evidence of a GP appointment or a photograph of medication given)
- When a pupil has been persistently absent and has received a warning later explaining that because of their persistent absence (below 90% attendance), future absences will be unauthorised unless evidence is provided to the school.

### 3.4 Holidays/Trips

The academy supports the view that every lesson counts and strongly discourages parents/carers from taking holidays during term time. The academy acknowledges that many families in our community may wish to visit friends and family abroad but they must do so during holiday time only. The academy publishes term dates as early as possible in advance so families can plan accordingly.

3.5 Only the Principal or their designate can authorise absence.

3.6 Within the policy, some actions are to be taken if the pupil is considered to be Persistently Absent. For the purposes of this policy, this means that the pupil's (authorised or unauthorised) absence is below 90% over the current academic year, or if in the first term of the school year and the pupil is not new to the school, below 90% for the previous school year.

## 4. Action taken when pupils are absent

4.1 The academy has a responsibility to determine if the absence is Authorised or Unauthorised. Authorised absences are those when the absence is unavoidable. These include:

- a) Medical or education appointments.
- b) Illness.
- c) Exceptional circumstances (this includes for religious observance)

Different actions are taken if absence is unauthorised or authorised absence. It is therefore important that parents provide evidence to support the reason for absence as this is required to make this assessment. If the appropriate evidence is not provided where it is needed the absence will be unauthorised.

### Medical appointments

4.2 If a parent knows in advance of absence due to an appointment, the academy office should be informed using the online form or by calling or coming in, and the appointment card/notification shown or emailed to [parents@kingsolomonacademy.org](mailto:parents@kingsolomonacademy.org). If the pupil is persistently absent, evidence of the medical appointment must be submitted, otherwise the absence will be regarded as unauthorised.

### **Illness**

4.3 If a pupil is ill, the parent or carer should complete the online form to inform the academy. If the pupil is absent and has seen a medical professional, they should submit evidence of this. This could be a photograph emailed to [parents@kingsolomonacademy.org](mailto:parents@kingsolomonacademy.org), or brought in person the office to be scanned. Evidence would usually include one of:

- doctor's note
- appointment text or card
- if they have been prescribed medicine, the prescription; or
- a receipt for over the counter medicine.

This provides evidence to support the absence being authorised. If a pupil is Persistently Absent, all absences for illness will be regarded as unauthorised unless evidence is made available. In addition, if a pupil is absent for 3 or more days in a row, evidence (a note, appointment card, prescription) must be provided for the absence to be authorised.

4.4 If parents or carers do not report absence to the school, the parent or carer will be phoned, and / or a text message and email sent to make contact. If the school is concerned about the welfare of a child because of a lack of contact from parents, a home visit will be made if possible. If this is not possible, a member of the senior leadership team will make an informed judgement about whether other services need to be contacted. They will consider the ease with which the family is usually in contact in this decision and other factors. If no contact is made after three consecutive days, the police or social services will be contacted.

4.5 A member of staff will usually make contact with the family again at the end of the day or period of absence to discuss how the child is feeling, what they have missed in school and to welcome them back as soon as possible.

### **Pupil absence for exceptional reasons**

4.7 If parents or carers have their child be absent for any other reason other than illness or a medical appointment, they must complete an [Exceptional Leave of Absence Application](#). No absences for holidays are authorised, unless in exceptional circumstances. Permission for absence will only be given if these circumstances are judged to be exceptional. If the absence is not authorised and this leads to a period of unauthorised absence, the parent or carer may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

4.8 Exceptional leave for religious absence should be applied for with the same form and will be granted on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Please note that no more than one day in any term will be authorised for an individual occasion of religious observance and no more than three days in any academic year. Where the recognised day of religious observance falls on a day other than a school day, leave will not be authorised.

4.9 The application for exceptional leave for any reason must be made in advance and the Principal (or their designate) must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. If permission for exceptional leave is not granted, the academy will write to the parent informing them of the outcome and making it clear that the absence is not authorised and if the child is absent, a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to be made.

4.10 The law does not grant parents a right to take their child out of school during term time for trips. Any absence from school will disrupt a child's learning. Some parents may consider that a holiday, special leave or children accompanying them for work is educational, however children miss out on the teaching that their peers receive during the leave. Leave in term time also disrupts the routines developed and which are beneficial to the child's development. Children returning from term time leave are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other pupils in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid, therefore;

- Leave in term time will not be agreed by except if it is genuinely exceptional. Family holidays, or the attendance to a family wedding would not, for example, be considered exceptional reasons.
- Any period of leave taken without authorisation in advance will be classed as unauthorised, unless the circumstances were unforeseeable.
- A period of extended leave which is unauthorised may be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed penalty notice (see Appendix 2).

Where absence occurs because the pupil did not return to school due to circumstances the parent believes constitute an exceptional reason, evidence must be submitted within 10 days of the return to school of the arrangements that were made to ensure the pupil planned to return to school on time (for example evidence of flights being booked with the correct dates). If this evidence is not supplied within 10 days, the absence will be unauthorised and the leave will be considered for a fixed penalty notice referral.

## **5. School actions when absence is concerning**

5.1 The Attendance Team (SLT, attendance administrators) review the attendance of all pupils on a daily and weekly basis.

5.2 Attendance is a weekly agenda item for all class teachers/form tutors across the academy. Staff use an attendance tracker to identify pupils who need to be escalated through the attendance 'steps' process due to the attendance of a pupil dropping. Staff bear in mind a range of contextual factors when escalating attendance concerns for example if the absence is due to a child contracting chicken pox. The step process is included as Appendix 1. The purpose of the steps outlined are to ensure that a formal process has been followed with documented interventions to show that the school has communicated effectively with parents where there has been repeated absence.

5.3 If a pupil's attendance is of concern (below 90%) parents are at risk of a referral to the Local Authority and may be liable for fast-track court prosecution, prosecution and/or a fixed penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. See Appendix Two.

5.4 If the pupil is below 5 years of age, attendance is not statutory and the Local Authority will not issue fines due to absence. In this instance the school will write to the parent formally resetting the expectations of attendance. In extreme cases where the child is in Nursery, the place may be withdrawn if the child is not consistently attending school.

## **6. Lateness**

6.1 The academy day starts at 8.20am in secondary, 8.30am in Y5 and Y6 and at 8.35am in N-Y4. If pupils arrive after this time they are considered late.

6.2 Pupils who arrive after this time must be entered into the late register found at the academy entrances.

6.3 Registers close at 9am on OYS and 9.05 on YYS. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as 'U' (late, unauthorised absence). Pupils receiving multiple Us will have reduced attendance and so will be eligible for attendance interventions including a Fixed Penalty Notice.

6.4 At Primary, pupils are not held to account for being late to school. If a pupil is late, school staff will usually speak to the pupil and their parent about the importance of being on time to school. Where lateness is persistent, staff will write to or meet with the parent to clarify expectations and discuss what support can be put in place to help the pupil arrive on time.

6.5 At Secondary, pupils are held to account for being late to school. If a pupil is late, they will be issued a 30 minute detention. If they are in Year 7, 8 or 9 they serve this in the day during Activity time. They also lose 5 KSA pounds on their weekly KSA payslip. Sanctions are issued so that pupils learn to be responsible for being on time. This is preparatory for their adult life and ensures that learning time is maximised.

## **10. Registers**

These are important legal documents which must be completed carefully and promptly twice a day for the morning and afternoon session.

Pupils entering the school site after the published start times are late and are marked as such, even if the register has not been taken yet in class.

## **11. Rewards and Sanctions**

KSA rewards excellent attendance and uses a range of rewards for pupils of different ages and stages:

- Weekly shout outs and attendance certificates in assemblies
- Attendance officers send improved attendance e-postcards/emails
- For Secondary, half termly 98%+ attendance special breakfast
- For Secondary, the highest class attendance gets an extra 0.1 on 'Summit Score' per half term
- For Primary, additional 5 marbles in class marble jars for 98%+ attendance over a week
- For Primary, individual attendance badges for half termly 98%+
- In Secondary, pupils are recognised for their attendance. Part of the holistic weekly summary document issued to each pupil (payslip) includes recognition for daily attendance. Absence in Secondary may lead to missing Enrichment time to catch up on missed academic work.

## Appendix One: Attendance Action Steps in response to attendance concerns

Attendance		
97% - 100%	Best chance of academic success	Green
95% - 96.9%	Risk of underachievement	Yellow
93% - 94.9%	Serious risk of underachievement	Amber
90% - 92.9%	Severe risk of underachievement	Pink
0% - 89.9%	Extreme risk – persistent absentee	Red

Step	Attendance	Action
STEP 1	Initial drop in attendance	Email from Attendance Administrator
STEP 2	Sustained absence after previous step	Meeting with class tutor to set and review targets followed up with a formal letter
STEP 3	Sustained absence after previous step	Meeting with Year Lead/Head of Year to set and review targets followed up with a formal letter
STEP 4	Sustained absence after previous step	Meeting with Head of Small School to set and review targets followed up with a formal letter
STEP 5	Sustained absence after previous step	Meeting with Vice Principal to set and review targets followed up in writing. Further actions could include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Referral to WCC Early Help</li> <li>- Referral to WCC PN fine 1 (£60)</li> <li>- WCC PN Warning Monitoring period</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 2 : PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICES:

More information can be found here: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/children-and-families/education/school-attendance/penalty-notices-fines-non-attendance-school>

Academies will notify the EWS of all cases where attendance has fallen below 90% in the preceding 6-week period and no valid reason for the absence has been provided by the parent/carer, along with evidence of what measures they have taken to bring this matter to the parent's/carer's attention.

The LA will produce an information letter for distribution to all parents/carers whose children have been identified as falling below 90% attendance at their respective academies. This will set out clearly the circumstances whereby a Penalty Notice can be issued and the consequences for failure to pay within the required time scale. Each pupil's attendance is monitored for 15 academy days following the issue of the letter to see if the desired improvement has taken place. An acceptable improvement is an increase in attendance above 90% for the 15-day period. **However parents may not receive a warning from the Local Authority if their child has taken a holiday/leave in term-time without the school's permission.**

Should the required improvement not take place and no valid reason for the absence is provided, the Court Officer will decide whether to issue the Penalty Notice or to proceed with a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Where a Penalty Notice is issued, it will be sent by the Court Officer through the post using First Class post to the parent's last known address.

**Withdrawal of Penalty Notices:**

The LA will withdraw any Notices issued if:

- a) It can be established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- b) The use of the Penalty Notice does not conform to the terms of the Protocol.

Where either of the above occurs, written notice of the withdrawal shall be given to the recipient and any monies paid over shall be fully refunded.

Also, no proceedings under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 shall be instituted against the recipient in respect of the period covered by the withdrawn Notice.

**Payment:**

Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice shall be for the sum of £60 if paid within 28 days rising to £120 thereafter until the final deadline of 42 days.

Payment in full of the Penalty Notice discharges the parent's legal responsibility for the period of unauthorised absence outlined in the Notice and the parent cannot be subsequently prosecuted under any other enforcement powers for the period.

Any revenue arising from the issue of Penalty Notices will be retained by the LA to defray the costs involved in their issue or any subsequent prosecutions arising from non-payment.

**Non Payment:**

Non payment of Penalty Notices within the prescribed time limits will result in a prosecution under Section (1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of the pupil/ren at school.