

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by S&C Committee Chair: March 2013

Review Date: March 2016



This policy is based on our belief that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for our children. We feel that the whole school community takes responsibility for good attendance. There has been consultation with other local schools in order to maintain a consistency of approach in line with Local Authority guidelines.

## Aims

- To raise attendance
- To improve punctuality
- To raise levels of attainment and achievement
- To encourage a love of learning both in children and their parents/carers

## Expectations and Responsibilities

### We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That they attend school regularly
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school

### We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and in a “condition to learn”
- To encourage their child to appreciate the importance of attending school regularly
- To take an active interest in their child’s school work, reinforcing the school’s policy on homework, behaviour, attitude to work, etc. and attending parents’ evenings wherever possible
- To work in partnership with the school and the Local Authority to resolve any non-attendance issues
- To notify the school if their child is absent by 10am on the first day of absence, providing an explanation
- To avoid, wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments during school hours
- To be aware of the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence and particularly to note school and Local Authority policy in relation to holidays taken during school time
- To use the absence request form provided by the school to request authorisation in advance of any absence

### Pupils and parents/carers can expect the following from the school:

- To respond promptly to any issue which may lead to non-attendance or irregular attendance. A letter will be sent from Kennet Valley School not later than the third day of absence, if there has been no communication from parents, unless contact by telephone has been made by the school. Regular lateness will be followed up in the same way
- To complete the registers in accordance with the guidelines set out below
- To be sensitive to the needs of the individual parent/carer
- To produce a policy which is consistently applied and clearly communicated to parents
- To respond to requests for absence by replying on the appropriate form, giving reasons if absence is not to be authorised, and ensure that copies are kept on file and forwarded to the class teacher so that the appropriate register coding is used
- To follow the Department for Children, Schools and Families’ regulations regarding registration

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## Wiltshire Local Authority has a responsibility:

- To promote excellent attendance in all Wiltshire schools
- To provide a Service Level Agreement, by the Education Welfare Service, with a number of consultation visits
- To work in close partnership with the school, the Education Welfare Officer visiting termly and more often if needed, for Pastoral Support meetings

## Marking the Attendance Register

- Each register must, by law, be marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session
- Registers should be marked in ink
- Registers must distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences, as termly and annual data are collected by the Department for Children, Schools and Families
- Each teacher must be responsible for following up lateness and absences in the following way:
  1. Talking to pupil and/or parent/carer
  2. If no response, ask Administrative Officer to phone parents after 11am on day of absence
  3. Inform Headteacher if no response is forthcoming, and a letter will be sent out on the third day of absence. Note the date of this letter
  4. If parents/carers do not respond within seven days a second letter should be sent and the date noted again.
  5. If after 10 days, no satisfactory reason has been given, a referral can be made to the EWO
  6. If the school is concerned about attendance, the parent/carer may be contacted to discuss the situation
  7. If there is 15% or more unauthorised absence over a two term period a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer
- After the register has been taken at 8.55, arrivals are recorded as Late. After 9.15 (unless a child has a medical appointment) children are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

## Guidelines

### *Authorised absences*

These are absences that Kennet Valley School has approved in advance or has accepted the explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification.

These may include medical and dental appointments, (although these should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible), funerals, religious observance, and sickness.

### *Unauthorised absences*

These are absences that the school has not approved or no satisfactory explanation has been given. They include such things as holidays, shopping, persistent illness without a doctor's note, birthday treats, unable to find school uniform, lateness after registration has closed with no valid reason.

**NB It is the Headteacher's decision to register an absence as authorised or unauthorised.**

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## **Holidays**

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents/carers from taking holidays in term time; therefore all holidays will be unauthorised. However there may be a few exceptional circumstances and reasons which fall into an acceptable category and these are clearly stated in the Wiltshire Council letter (Attached) regarding code of conduct for the taking of holidays in term time.

All holiday requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher on the official form prior to the holiday being taken.

No holiday requests will be granted during the week in May in which the SATs take place for Year 6. Notification of this date will be given to parents/carers as early as possible in the academic year.

## **Monitoring Good Patterns of Attendance and Punctuality**

- Excessive numbers of authorised absences such as illness may need to be followed up by the school nurse
- Absence rates are checked regularly by the Headteacher and any patterns noted and followed up
- The Education Welfare Officer will check on a termly basis
- Attendance figures are sent annually to the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Local Authority as part of national and local monitoring of attendance

## **Legal Action**

Should this be necessary, we at Kennet Valley School would follow the Wiltshire Local Authority guidelines under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act.

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Approved by S&C Committee Chair: November 2009  
Review Date: November 2010



## Absence Request Form

**Taking your child out of school during term time may harm your child's academic progress.**

Schools may agree up to 10 days holiday absence in special circumstances with consideration being given to pupil's attendance, attainment and public examinations. Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Circumstances which are notified to the school or Local Authority **after** a decision has been made by the Headteacher will not be considered. Therefore please be certain to provide details of the special circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Please read the attached Local Authority leaflet which explains Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised holidays during term time.

Name of Child(ren)	
Date of Birth	
Class	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days requested	
Known siblings and school(s) attending	

Special Circumstances (reason) for holiday to be taken during term time:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

For school use:

Attendance%:

Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:

Total unauthorised absence this year:

Request authorised: Yes/No



**Wiltshire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

**Carolyn Godfrey**  
Director, Department for Children & Education

The Headteacher  
All Wiltshire LA Maintained Schools

Direct Line: 01722 743907  
Fax: 01722 744860  
Operator:

**Circular No A186/08**

Please ask for: Maxine Gibson

Our ref:

E-mail: maxinegibson@wiltshire.gov.uk

Your ref:

June 2008

**Holidays in Term Time**

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days in the school year for a family holiday if they believe that the circumstances warrant it.

Schools may agree up to 10 days "holiday leave" in **special circumstances such as:**

- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time **if** the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.

In general terms, the Local Authority would expect a school to consider the potential negative impact that any absence can have on a child's academic progress, even if a child's attendance is good, for example at 95% or above.

The Local Authority would not, however, expect schools to agree holiday leave if:

- the pupil already has poor attendance and the EWS is involved;
- the pupil would miss public examinations such as National Curriculum Key Stage 2 and 3 SATs and GCSEs or similar.

**Holidays for the following reasons should not be authorised:**

- **availability of cheap holidays;**
- **availability of the desired accommodation;**
- **poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and**
- **overlap with the beginning or end of term.**

In exceptional circumstances, schools can approve more than 10 days holiday, called extended leave of absence or extended holidays.

In all circumstances of holiday leave, a written application must be made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides in advance of the holiday and a date for the pupil's return to school agreed.

Schools need to be aware that following consultation, the Local Authority has amended its local code of conduct to allow the issue of Penalty Notices by the Local Authority to parents of pupils for periods of unauthorised holiday absence. This will come into effect from 1 September 2008.

Yours sincerely

Maxine Gibson

**Maxine Gibson**  
Principal Education Welfare Officer

Wiltshire County Council, Local Education Team (Salisbury District) Wilton Rooms,  
The Hollows, Wilton, Salisbury Wiltshire SP2 0JE

