

# Joydens Wood Infant School Attendance Policy



## Key Details

**Staff with responsibility for attendance:**  
Rachel Hately – Headteacher  
Bryony Clarke – Achievement Leader  
Helen Flowers – Office Assistant

**Named Governor with lead responsibility: Cynthia Jacobs (Chair)**

**Area Inclusion and Attendance Lead: David Boyd**  
Tel: 03000 418532, Email: [David.Boyd@kent.gov.uk](mailto:David.Boyd@kent.gov.uk)

**School Liaison Officer: Sim Kaur**  
Tel: 03000 412109, Email: [Sim.Kaur2@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Sim.Kaur2@kent.gov.uk)

**Date written: December 2017**  
**Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: January 2018**  
**Date of next review: September 2018**

**This policy will be reviewed at least annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.**

## **Statement of Intent**

Joydens Wood Infant School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Joydens Wood Infant School.

## **Parental Responsibility**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.**

Pupils are expected to arrive by 09:00am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded on the sign-in computer system.

If a child is to be absent, a phone call to the school must be made by 08:15am on each day they will be absent and an anticipated return date given; if the school has not been notified of a valid reason, or it is unclear from the message, the school will endeavour to make contact by phone.

## **The Role of the School Staff**

At Joydens Wood Infant School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

Mrs B Clarke, Achievement Leader, has overall responsibility for the weekly monitoring of attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher and Office notify Mrs Clarke of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Sim Kaur (School Liaison Officer) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, this is followed-up by a senior member of staff.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes).
- Parents are informed termly of the child's attendance figure.

### **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

### **Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance / Punctuality**

- 97% attendance – Mrs Clarke to investigate and contact parent if appropriate.
- 5 Lates – school intervention letter.
- 95% attendance or 10 Lates - school intervention letter / Mrs Clarke will meet with parents.
- 90% or 15 Lates – Mrs Clarke and Miss Hately will meet with parents.
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

## **Medical Issues**

Medical appointments are an absence and must be recorded as such. Where possible, parents are asked to arrange appointments outside of school time. Pupils should attend school prior to and following a medical/dental appointment and avoid a full day's absence.

Where individual attendance falls below 95% (10 days absence), medical documentary evidence must be submitted for **every** absence / lateness; this can include a copy of the medication/prescription, a stamped appointment card or a letter from a doctor/hospital.

Children should not be kept at home for minor illnesses or injuries – please see Appendix 1: Health Flyer - Should I Send My Child to School? for further guidance.

## **Lateness**

At Joydens Wood Infant School the morning register is taken at 09:00am. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 09:30am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

## **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:**

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

## **Late Pick-Up**

Joydens Wood Infant School recognises that it has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, and that this extends to having arrangements in place for dealing with children who are not collected at the end of a school day, or at the end of an authorised activity. When children are late to be picked up, two things happen: the child becomes anxious about why their parent/carer is late and staff may have to stay past their scheduled time and are delayed in their other responsibilities or late for personal commitments.

Uncollected children will be taken to the Office and the Office staff informed. All parents who are more than 15 minutes late to collect their child will receive a phone call. When the child is collected, they should be signed out on the computer system and a reason for lateness provided.

A late pick-up of any amount of minutes will be recorded and Mrs Clarke will monitor the log on a weekly basis. Parents/carers who are persistently late in picking-up their children will be contacted by Mrs Clarke or Miss Hatley.

## **Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

### **Local Authority Action may include:-**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

### **Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

#### **Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

**Appendix 1 Health Flyer – Should I Send My Child to School?**

**Appendix 2 School Referral Pathway**



## Appendix 1



### *Should I Send My Child to School?*

<p>Parent is Sick, Stressed, Hospitalised</p>	<p>YES - If you are sick, your child still needs to attend school. Your illness does not excuse your child from attending. We are all sick at times so plan ahead for these days. Get a neighbour, relative or spouse to take your child to school and pick him or her up.</p> <p>*In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to help get your child to school – please contact Miss Hatley or the Office.</p>
<p>Chronic Diseases (Asthma, Diabetes, Sickle Cell, Epilepsy etc.)</p> <p>Chronic disease is a long-lasting condition that can be controlled but not cured.</p>	<p>YES – Your child should attend school. Our team are trained to assist your child with his or her chronic disease and associated needs.</p>
<p>Child Doesn't Want to go to School</p> <p>Frequent crying, fear, anger, not wanting to socialise, behaviour change, stomach ache, nausea.</p>	<p>YES– You should keep your child in school, but try to determine what is causing the changes. Talk to our team; your child may be experiencing separation anxiety or be worried about their work or friendships – we can often help!</p>
<p>Cold Symptoms</p> <p>Stuffy /runny nose, sneezing, mild cough.</p>	<p>YES - If your child is able to participate in school activities, send him or her to school. You can also pop in to administer Calpol at any time (regrettably we are unable to do so).</p>
<p>Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)</p> <p>The white of the eye is pink and there is a thick yellow/green discharge.</p>	<p>YES – Your child can attend school, but call a health care provider to prescribe medication/treatment.</p>
<p>Head Lice</p> <p>Intense itching of the head; may feel like something is moving.</p>	<p>YES – Your child can be in school if he or she has had an initial treatment of shampooing of hair with a product for lice.</p> <p>PLEASE INFORM THE SCHOOL ASAP – this will be treated confidentially and allow others to check their children.</p>
<p>Threadworms</p> <p>Sometimes cause itchiness around the bottom, which can be worse at night and disturb sleep.</p>	<p>YES - Treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts.</p>
<p>Tonsillitis</p>	<p>YES – There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic.</p>
<p>Warts and Verrucae</p>	<p>YES</p>

<p>Fever</p> <p>Fever usually means illness, especially if your child has a fever of 38°C or higher as well as other symptoms like behaviour change, rash, sore throat, vomiting etc.</p>	<p>NO – If your child has a fever of 38°C or higher, keep them at home and follow NHS guidance / consult a health care provider as necessary.</p>
<p>Diarrhoea</p> <p>Frequent, loose or watery stool may mean illness but can also be caused by food and medication.</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child at home for 48 hours from the last episode. If stool is bloody, if the child has abdominal pain, fever or vomiting, you should consult a health care provider.</p>
<p>Vomiting</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child at home for 48 hours from the last episode. If vomiting continues, contact a health care provider.</p>
<p>Severe Coughing</p> <p>Severe, uncontrolled, rapid coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing.</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child home and contact a health care provider. Asthma - if symptoms are due to asthma, provide treatment according to your prescription and when symptoms are controlled send your child to school.</p>
<p>Rash</p>	<p>NO – If a rash spreads quickly, is not healing, or has open weeping wounds, you should keep your child at home and have him or her seen by a health care provider.</p>
<p>Vaccine-Preventable Diseases</p> <p>Chicken Pox - fever, headache, stomach ache or sore throat, then a red itchy skin rash develops on the stomach first and then limbs and face.</p> <p>Measles &amp; Rubella (German Measles) – swollen glands, rash that starts behind ears then the face and the rest of the body, sore joints, mild fever and cough, red eyes.</p> <p>Mumps – fever, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, swollen tender salivary glands.</p> <p>Pertussis (Whooping Cough) – many rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched “whoop”, vomiting, very tired.</p> <p>Slapped Cheek (Fifth Disease/Parvovirus B19) – bright red rash on the cheeks.</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.</p> <p>Please also CONTACT THE SCHOOL ASAP so that parents / staff are aware as many of these diseases are a risk to pregnant women.</p>

## Appendix 2

### Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

