

Attendance Policy

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Issue Number	006	Author	Nicola Kelly
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Associate Head of College site	Karl Haines – College site		

1. Introduction

This Attendance Policy reflects Keys Group’s EPIC values—Excellence, Passion, Integrity, Caring—and the Keys Connect approach, which emphasises relational, trauma-informed practices tailored to support pupils with complex needs and attendance challenges.

Keys Group schools are committed to working in partnership with pupils and families to promote and support high levels of attendance. In line with the Department for Education’s statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (updated August 2024), our approach prioritises early intervention, relationship-building, and understanding the barriers to attendance. We recognise that improving attendance is not solely a compliance issue but a collaborative effort rooted in pastoral care, wellbeing, and inclusive practice. Our schools consistently demonstrate strong engagement with families and pupils, and we aim to build on this strength by ensuring that support is proactive, respectful, and tailored to individual needs. Attendance is monitored rigorously, and strategies are implemented to address persistent or severe absence, always with the goal of re-engaging learners and fostering a culture where every day in school counts.

The policy complies with Part 3, paragraph 15 of the Independent School Standards 2014 (as amended), and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. It recognises the unique barriers faced by many of our pupils, including historical trauma and ongoing challenges, and commits to a personalised, empathetic approach to attendance improvement.

While our aspiration is for all pupils to achieve 100% attendance, we pursue this goal sensitively and realistically, recognising that many pupils join us with persistent absence patterns.

2. Policy Aims

At New Ways, we aim to ensure that every pupil:

- Feels safe, secure, and well cared for within the school community.
- Fully participates in school life, enjoying and achieving their potential.
- Feels valued and trusts staff to safeguard their wellbeing.
- Receives support tailored to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Understands the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Name
Governing Body (Chair)	James Madine
Regional Director	Kate Martin
Head Teacher	Michelle Woodward
Associate Head of College site	Karl Haines
School Attendance Leader	School Site: Anna Pickering College Site: Mary Hood
Daily Attendance Contact	School Site: Anna Pickering/ Diane Smith College Site: Mary Hood/Siobhan Gill

4. Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of absence before the school day starts via phone

School Site: 07394871931/01214512055 or email Anna on:
anna.pickering@keyseducation.ac.uk or Diane on: 1015833@keyseducation.ac.uk.
Arrangements for longer absences will be agreed as needed.

College Site: 01527 958686/07355627207 Mary Hood or email on:
mary.hood@keyseducation.ac.uk or Siobhan Gill 01527 958686 or email on
siobhan.gill@keyseducation.ac.uk

Parents/carers needing support with attendance should contact (School Site) Anna Pickering via phone or email or Mary Hood (College Site).

5. Registration and Lateness

- Registration is taken twice daily (AM: 9:30 PM: 12:30 PM)
- Pupils arriving within 30 minutes after registration are marked late (Code L).
- Pupils arriving after 30 minutes are marked absent (Code U or equivalent).
- Persistent lateness linked to transport or external factors will be addressed collaboratively with families, transport providers, and local authorities.

6. Categorisation of Absence

Authorised absences include:-

- Genuine illness
- Emergency medical/dental appointments (evidence may be requested)
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

Unauthorised absences include:-

- Family holidays
- Shopping trips
- Birthdays
- Caring for family members
- Transport unavailability

7. Attendance Monitoring and Intervention

- Attendance is benchmarked on admission and monitored daily using ARBOR data.
- Patterns of absence are analysed to identify pupils or cohorts needing support.
- Attendance improvement meetings are held weekly to review data and progress against plans.
- Positive attendance is recognised with rewards and certificates.
- Pupils with attendance concerns receive personalised Attendance Support Plans developed collaboratively with families.
- Home visits and safe and well checks are conducted for unexplained absences, especially for pupils known to social care.
- Multi-agency collaboration is maintained to support attendance improvement.

8. Safeguarding and Children Missing in Education (CME)

- Unexplained absences trigger safe and well checks, including unannounced home visits where necessary.
- The school collaborates with social care and other agencies to safeguard pupils.
- The Local Authority is notified of pupils missing from education as per statutory guidance.
- The school cooperates fully with local authority procedures regarding CME.

9. Legal Framework

- The school adheres to the National Framework for Penalty Notices where applicable, including the new statutory guidance effective from August 2024.
- Parents have legal duties to ensure regular attendance under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, with penalties including fines and possible prosecution.
- The school will work with local authorities to enforce attendance where voluntary support fails.

- Penalty Notices require a preceding 'Notice to Improve' and follow the prescribed fine schedule (£80 within 21 days, £160 within 28 days).

10. Parental Responsibilities

Parents/carers must:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Report absences promptly with reasons.
- Update the school daily during ongoing absences unless agreed otherwise.
- Request leave for exceptional circumstances in advance.
- Provide evidence for planned medical appointments.
- Work collaboratively with the school and other agencies to resolve attendance barriers.

11. Training and Equality

- Staff receive training on attendance policy and its links to safeguarding.
- The policy is implemented with sensitivity to diversity and individual pupil needs.
- Any concerns regarding equality impact should be raised with line management for appropriate action.

Appendices – Procedures and Localisation of Policy

Appendix A – Tiers of Intervention around Attendance

Attendance Tier	Identifying Factor	Potential Strategies
1. Expected attendance is maintained	Pupil consistently meets their expected attendance target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebrate through positive points or rewards - Continue regular monitoring
2. Expected attendance is not consistently maintained	Patterns of poor attendance identified through data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss barriers with pupil and parents/carers - Develop and agree an Attendance Support Plan - Monitor progress for minimum 4 weeks - Engage external support if needed (e.g., Early Help)
3. Attendance is not improving / lack of engagement	Persistent absence despite support and engagement efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalise support with attendance contract or Education Supervision Order - Clearly explain consequences - Continue multi-agency collaboration
4. Enforcement	All support avenues exhausted, no improvement or engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue Penalty Notice in line with National Framework - Consider prosecution to protect pupil's right to education

Appendix B – Attendance Management Plan (Stages)

Stage	Description	Actions
Stage 1	Attendance falls below target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send letter to parent/carer informing of concern - Explain impact of low attendance
Stage 2	Continued absence and decline after Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send Stage 2 letter - Arrange home visit or virtual meeting to discuss attendance and create plan
Stage 3	Further absence after Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite parents for attendance meeting - Review Attendance Support Plan - Explain possible escalation
Stage 4	Unauthorised absences continue after Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue Penalty Notice Warning letter (Headteacher authorised) - Liaise with Local Authority Attendance Team
Stage 5	Persistent absence despite penalty notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request Local Authority to consider prosecution - Continue multi-agency support

Appendix C – Attendance Codes (DfE Guidance Summary)

Code	Description	Usage
/	Present (AM or PM)	Pupil is present in school
L	Late (before register closes)	Pupil arrives after start of session but before register closes
U	Unauthorised absence (late after register closes)	Pupil arrives after register closes without valid reason
I	Illness	Authorised absence due to illness
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence for medical reasons (evidence may be requested)
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence for other exceptional circumstances
G	Unauthorised absence	Absence without permission or valid reason
N	No reason yet provided	Absence not yet explained
X	Not required to be in school	For example, pupils in approved off-site educational activity

Appendix D – Sample Attendance Improvement Plan

Individual Attendance Plan

Please note: It is important to capture a full picture of support offered over time. Therefore, rather than deleting or editing historical entries, it is better to add subsequent interventions or updates to the plan along with the date that these were added. If the school has any other additional record-keeping systems (such as an online safeguarding system), staff should ensure that the relevant details are recorded in both places.

The separate form to record review meetings can be copied and pasted as many times as needed.

Name of pupil	
Year group/class	
Staff supporting with attendance plan and roles	
Date plan was agreed	
Attendance history	
Current risk factors/current barriers to attendance	

Strategies to be implemented by the school e.g. bespoke timetable, transition plan, MDT		
Details of strategy (including date commenced)	Purpose of implementing the strategy	Member of staff responsible

Expectations of the pupil		
Details of expectations	How has this been communicated to the pupil?	Monitoring arrangements (who by and when?)

Expectations of the family/Carers		
Details of expectations	How has this been communicated to the pupil's family?	Monitoring arrangements (who by and when?)

External support		
Details of agency/partner	Support being offered	Date support commenced

Record of attendance reviewing meeting	
Date of review	
Individuals present	
Situation since last review	
Milestones achieved since last review	
Areas discussed	
Outcome of meeting (tick as appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue with initial plan <input type="checkbox"/> Continue plan with new or supplementary strategies added <input type="checkbox"/> Escalate attendance plan to next stage
Date of next review	