



Keystone Academy Trust

Gedney Church End Primary Academy



A WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Agreed trustees 3 rd December 2019		
COVID Appendix June 2020		

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1. MISSION STATEMENT:

Keystone Academy Trust is committed to providing full and rewarding education for all pupils. The Trust believes that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end, each academy within the Trust will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance are dealt with as quickly as possible and where appropriate support will be given to improve attendance.

The Government states that an attendance rate of less than 95% will have a detrimental effect on a child's education. It is therefore the Academy's aim that each of our pupils should have an attendance rate as high as possible with our target for attendance being at least 97% each academic year unless there are exceptional circumstances, out of the child's control, that affect their attendance at school. If this is the case, the Academy will support that child and their family to ensure that their attendance rate is as high as it can possibly be.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy received the full agreement of the Keystone Academy Trust and was agreed at their meeting on 3rd December 2019.

3. AIMS:

It is recognised that:

- As a school, we aim to ensure that all children achieve excellent attendance.
- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Excellent attendance will be recognised and rewarded with a comprehensive award programme throughout the school year.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

4. EXPECTATIONS:

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That they attend school regularly – our target is at least 97% attendance
- That they will arrive on time (8:40am) 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:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually (8:40am).
- Parents should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason, such as sickness, they should contact the school as soon as possible, preferably before 9:00am on the first morning of absence, providing a reason for absence. This may be done by phone, letter or in person. If illness continues for longer than five days, medical evidence will be required, e.g. Doctor's appointment card. Failure to contact school during the absence may result in a Safe and Well visit or referral to Children's Services
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's attendance or performance.
- To attempt to make all medical and dental appointments during school holidays or after school hours where possible. Medical appointments during school hours will not be authorised unless an appointment card, hospital letter or text from the GP/hospital/dentist is forwarded to school. Providing these retrospectively is acceptable. Absence will only be authorised for the duration of the appointment plus any reasonable travel time.
- To ensure that holidays are not taken during school term times
- An application form completed for any planned absence accompanied by a letter or medical appointment form to the Headteacher at least 2 weeks prior to the planned absence and before holidays are booked.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from our school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Registers will close at 8:55am
- Children arriving at school between 8:55am and 9:30am will be marked as late
- Children arriving after 9:30am with no specific reason will receive an unauthorised absence mark.
- In the event that a child fails to attend punctually on 10 or more occasions, a letter will be sent to parents/carers requesting that they attend a meeting in school to discuss the matter further and to offer support as necessary. Failure to improve punctuality could lead to further action being taken.
- First day absence contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will treat the disclosure of information sensitively and only inform the necessary staff).
- Recognition and reward for good attendance
- Regular reports on their child's attendance and punctuality in mid-year and end of year reports and at parents' evenings.
- A quality education
- It is government policy not to authorise holidays during term time; holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances

A telephone call to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below 95% or is in danger of dropping below this.

Termly reports will be made by the Head of School to the school's governing body on the issues of attendance and punctuality.

Term Time Holidays

- Any requests for holiday in term time must be made in advance in writing and in line with GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES and will only be agreed in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**.
- Taking a holiday in term time simply to save money does not constitute an exceptional circumstance and will result in a fine;
- All parents/carers should apply for leave no less than 14 days prior to the period of absence;
- If the absence is not agreed and the pupil goes on the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may then be referred to Lincolnshire County Council and could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine under Section 444(b) of the Education Act 1996;
- Where a pupil was removed from school for a holiday during the previous academic year, and then is absent due to a holiday in the current year, the case will automatically be referred to Lincolnshire County Council for a Fixed Penalty fine;
- Where a pupil fails to return within 10 school days of a previously notified date schools have the power to remove the child from the school roll and report them to Children Missing Education at Lincolnshire County Council.

5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS

Attendance will be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the **BEGINNING** of each session
- Attendance checks will be completed at appropriate times (weekly for targeted pupils) ½ termly for all pupils
- All pupils with less than 92% attendance will become targeted pupils
- An 'end of year' Gold Award, for 97%+ attendance achieved throughout the year.
- A trophy to be presented to the class with the best attendance each week.
- All awards to be awarded by the Head of School and/or the Executive Head Teacher as appropriate
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school
- Pastoral Team and Head of School working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Sending parents termly absence reports, together with targets for improvement as appropriate.
- Attendance and absence figures will be written on each classroom door daily.

6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:

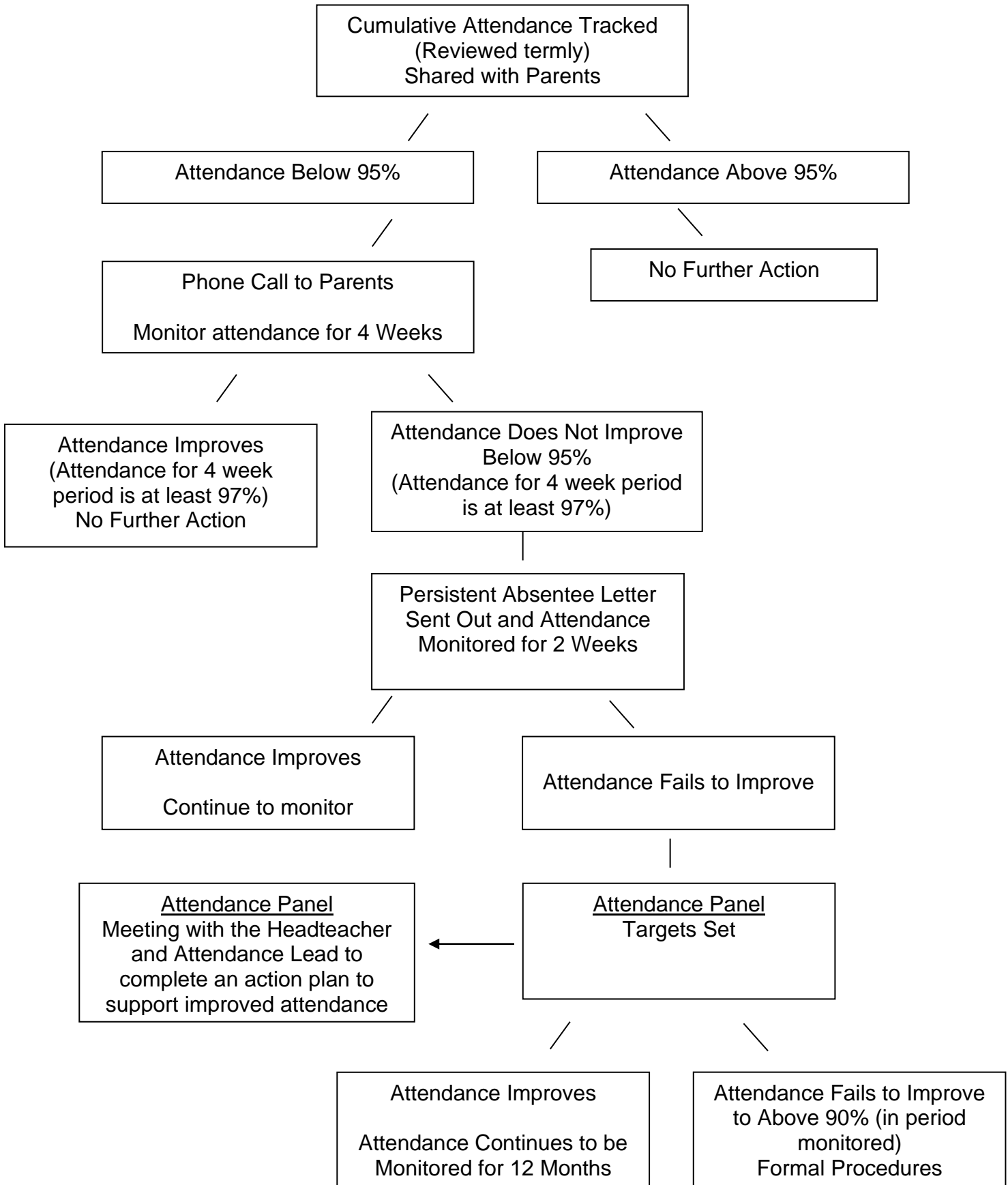
When a pupil does not attend, the school will respond as follows:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. First day absence phone calls will be made if no notification of absence has been received by 9:30am.
- Where there is no response by 10:30am, there will be a visit from a member of the school staff. If the school are unable to raise any response at the home, they will request the police carry out a 'safe and well check' to the property.
- If any pupil is absent for a period of 10 days (particularly when we have had no contact from parents/carers) the absence will be unauthorised and notified to Lincolnshire County Council's Pupils Not Attending Regularly (PNAR) service.

- For pupils where non-attendance continues or irregular patterns of attendance are causing concern, the case will be discussed with the Pastoral Support team for the academy and further action planned in line with the Attendance Flow Chart (please see overleaf).
- Attendance will be monitored by the school. If a pupils attendance falls below 90% for any reason (including illness or holidays), they will be classed as Persistent Absentees (PA). A letter will be sent to parents to make them aware of this. If attendance does not improve within two weeks of a school notifying parents of poor attendance, they will be asked to attend a School Attendance Panel meeting. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, parent/carer and student and will aim to identify and solve any problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school. Parent/carers are obliged to attend.
- The case will continue to be monitored and if there is no improvement, a penalty warning letter will be issued. Failure to improve attendance will result in a Penalty Fine from the Local Authority under Section 444(b) of the education act 1996. If it felt that the pupil's attendance is not improving due to lack of support or engagement with either the parent/carer or the pupil, consideration will be taken as to submitting a file to the Local Authority to initiate proceedings before a Magistrates Court.
- Staff are to raise any concerns they have in relation to a child's attendance with the Attendance leader in the first instance. The Attendance Leader is to be informed of any absence which: -
 - a) appears irregular;
 - b) shows regular patterns e.g. repeated absence on the same day/s of each week;
 - c) is unexplained or unauthorised.

This may be referred to the Executive Head Teacher, Head of School, Education Care Officer or Designated Safeguarding Lead where necessary.

ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART



Each attendance case will be reviewed on its individual merits, along with medical referrals/reports and advice from other professionals involved with the family.

Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme.
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEND Co-ordinator may be required
- Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff meeting weekly briefings.

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition the following specific responsibilities are allocated to individual staff:

Head of School

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To liaise with the pastoral support staff
- To oversee the work of administrative staff
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To report to the Head of School on attendance issues.

Class Teacher

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- To have a classroom display showing information on attendance.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

Administrative Staff

- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents
- To collate weekly attendance of targeted pupils
- To collate termly attendance of all pupils
- Maintain the central reporting of attendance on Integris
- To maintain a late book
- To identify children and classes for good attendance awards

Governors:

- Governors identified to monitor attendance and implementation of this policy
- Attendance Governor to represent governors at school attendance panels.
- Present regular attendance progress reports to Governors' Meetings.

Parents:

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

Family Support Service:

The Head of School and ECO (where applicable) will:

- Liaise with identified school staff
- Undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary
- Through group work with identified groups of pupils
- Where necessary instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- Plan and review casework
- Will provide feedback to schools
- Offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing
- Support the academy in the establishment and management of school attendance panels
- Support the academy in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Department of Education's guidance detailed at:
www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/

8. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed. We have a commitment to work with all necessary agencies to support all children in receiving an appropriate and high quality education.

Appendix 1 - COVID Attendance Routines

- Daily attendance registers will be taken and recorded on Integris.

- First day absence phone calls and home visits will still happen in line with academy policy.
- The following information should be followed for the codes used:

Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session

- This includes any pupil who is not in an eligible year group or priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children). This may also include children who are in an eligible year group but are not required in school for a specific session, i.e., year 10 and year 12 pupils who are not among the quarter of pupils expected in school at a given time.
- They should be recorded as code X (not required to be in school). (Temporarily, code X can be used for compulsory school age children – usually it is only used where non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.)

Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not

- This includes children in eligible year groups, children of critical workers and vulnerable children, such as:
 - where a pupil is shielding, self-isolating (see note 1), or the pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met in school, they should be recorded as code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). (Temporarily, code Y can be used where a pupil is prevented from attending school due to following government guidance on coronavirus). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the absence is due to shielding or isolation
 - where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be recorded as code I (illness). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms
 - where a pupil does not attend school - despite being eligible and is not shielding, self-isolating, unable to attend due to illness, nor has an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school, the pupil should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) where no other authorised absence code is appropriate
- At this time, all absence should be classed as authorised.

Pupils who are attending other schools

- Where a pupil is attending:
 - another school at which they are registered (for example, a pupil referral unit (PRU)), as would normally be the case, code D (dual registered) should be used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question as they are attending the other school at which they are registered
 - a host school on a temporary basis because their home school cannot accommodate them, the pupil will not be registered at the host school. The home school should record the pupil as attending an approved education activity using code B (off-site educational activity) - the host school does not need to add this child to their attendance register but should keep a record of their attendance for safeguarding purposes and include the child in their daily totals for the educational setting status form - schools should put in place arrangements whereby the host school notifies the home school of any absences.
- Using other authorised absence and attendance codes
- Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate schools may want to use these as usual, such as code M (medical appointment).