



KADER ACADEMY
ATTENDANCE POLICY
2017/2018

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Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school on time each day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- 1.2 Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.3 This policy provides guidelines on attendance & punctuality at Kader Academy.

2 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 This Policy will apply to all pupils and will be implemented by all staff employed by Kader Academy.
- 2.2 The Head Teacher will report to governors on the operation of this policy. The document is subject to review as required.

3 AIM OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 It is the aim of this policy to ensure that there is a consistent approach to implementing good attendance & punctuality throughout the academy.

4 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Attendance and punctuality play an important part in each pupil's school career. Staff at Kader Academy shall strive to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and punctually. All pupils of statutory school age who are registered at a school must attend regularly, in line with the relevant legislation (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013).
- 4.2 Any absence from school can have a detrimental effect on a child's future progress and continuity of learning. Regular absence for such reasons as holidays taken in term time can have a significant impact on achievement.

5 REGISTRATION

- 5.1 There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. This shall be shown on the Academy's computer records.
- 5.2 Staff, pupils and parents should see the taking of the register as an integral part of the day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.
- 5.3 Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the Head Teacher's role. The Head Teacher has the primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils in the classes and for contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality ensuring notes explaining absences are collected and maintain an accurate register of attendance. At Kader Academy the Head Teacher has overall responsibility; however this is delegated to the Business Manager, School Attendance Officer, employed Education Welfare Officer (Education Welfare Ltd) and class teachers. All of whom have their part to play in being responsible for ensuring attendance is a key priority in their day to day work.
- 5.4 In accordance with current legislation, each class in the Academy has an electronic attendance register. It is the Academy's policy that registers be completed by 8.55am and 1.05pm (Lower school) and 8.55am and 1.20pm (Upper school) when they will be saved and closed so that the Administration Team and Attendance Officer can access them.
- 5.5 It is the Academy's policy to record a late mark (L) for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place.
- 5.6 Children who arrive at the Academy after 9.25am or 1.20pm (Lower School) and 9.25am or 1.35pm (Upper School) will have a late after registration mark recorded (U).

6 ABSENCE

- 6.1 It is the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. Parents/Guardians should send notification as soon as the child is absent from school. Parents/Guardians should telephone the Academy's office before 9am each morning their child is absent to discuss the reason for the absence. The Academy needs to receive information when the child returns to school, in the form of a note and any medical evidence such as prescription, appointment card etc.
- 6.2 It is a fact that parentally-condoned unjustified absence is a serious problem in some schools. This can be every bit as damaging as the more traditional forms of truancy.
- 6.3 Only the Head Teacher of the Academy, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification in relation to a particular absence does not oblige the Academy to accept it if the Academy does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or where no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, the Academy will involve the Academy's Attendance Officer and employed Education Welfare Officer at an early opportunity.
- 6.4 An excessive amount of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. The Academy must alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. The Academy may authorise absence retrospectively where it is satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised and attendance procedures will be followed.
- 6.5 Section 444 of the Education Act 1992 states that no offence is committed where a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If the Academy is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be treated as authorised.
- 6.6 The Academy's Attendance Officer or the employed Education Welfare Officer, will request further information from the child's parents, where the Academy has reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.
- 6.7 Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, the Academy's Education Welfare Officer may attempt to refer the matter to a doctor working in the School Health Service to arrange a special medical, or to make contact with the pupil's GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the Academy notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service and/or School Health Service.

- 6.8 The Academy will not authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday apart from in the most exceptional of circumstances. Any leave of absence request that is declined by the Head Teacher may result in the Academy Attendance Officer issuing a warning letter and subsequent unauthorised absence may result in a referral to the Local Authority for the issue of a Penalty Notice.
- 6.9 Leave of absence during term time is at the Head Teacher's discretion and should not be considered a parental right.
- 6.10 Decisions made in relation to leave of absence, whether granted or not, will be applied equitably and consistently.

7 REPORTING ABSENCE

- 7.1 Once a reason for an absence is received, the Academy may authorise that absence by inserting the correct symbol on the computer records.
- 7.2 Reporting reasons for absence by telephone, verbally to a member of the Office Team/Attendance officer or a note are all acceptable. The Academy expects parents to contact the school and report the reason for absence on the first day of the absence before 9am. Kader Academy operates a first day calling system. If the Academy has not received a reason for absence by 9.30 am on the first day of absence a member of the Attendance Team will contact the home contact number to try and ascertain the reason for absence. If the absence continues to the second day then all contact information will be used to attempt to discuss the absence with the parent. If however, the absence continues these will be followed up by the Academy's Attendance Officer and / or paid Education Welfare Officer. Where concerns continue and/or a pupil has had 10 consecutive days or more of unauthorised absence from the Academy and no contact has been made, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service under Children Missing Education/attendance procedures. Where it is suspected that a pupil may be at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, radicalisation, or is a runaway or young carer safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- 7.3 Local Authority attendance procedures will be followed in relation to school transfers, exclusions and pupils who are dual registered and attending alternative educational provision.
- 7.4 The Attendance Team will keep all notes and notes of telephone messages and any verbal explanations. These will all be dated.
- 7.5 Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the Academy shall not take action beyond the staff in school recording the fact in the Signing out Book for the purpose of emergency evacuation. The pupil although registered is not physically present. Similarly the Academy must note the presence of a pupil (again for emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment.

8 LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME FOR FAMILY HOLIDAY

- 8.1 The Pupil Registration Regulations 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The legislation makes it clear that parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.
- 8.2 Parents are strongly urged to avoid making requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time due to the disruption and impact of the missed education on the child.
- 8.3 If parents feel that exceptional circumstances apply then they should complete a Leave of Absence form and must state in full their reasons for the absence, why they feel it is essential that it takes place during term time and if appropriate accompanied by evidence. An example of evidence in the case of a family holiday being a letter from an employer on letter headed paper, which states the reason why the applicant is unable to take a leave of absence for a family holiday during school holidays.
- 8.4 The Leave of Absence form can be obtained from the main office. It should be completed and returned to the office at least two school weeks prior to the leave being taken and marked for the attention of the Head Teacher for individual consideration. The Head Teacher will inform the parent of their decision.
- 8.5 At Kader Academy, exceptional circumstances have been determined as:
- Any exceptional circumstance arising, at the Head Teacher's discretion.
- 8.6 Parents have been made aware that the Local Authority will decide to issue penalty notice fines to parents. Currently the amounts are £60 per child for each parent where the fine is paid within 21 days, and £120 per child for each parent where the fine is paid between the 21st day and the 28th day. Parents should be aware that this means a family of two parents and two children will be fined £240 if the fine is paid within 21 days or £480 if the fine is paid from 21-28 days. For families with three children, these amounts would be £360/£720.
- 8.7 If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28th day period, then the Local Authority will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.
- 8.8 Late submissions of leave of absence forms and/or leave of absence taken without schools prior knowledge and permission may also be subject to penalty notice procedures.
- 8.9 Pupils who have 20 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence may be at risk of losing their school place.

9 CATEGORISING ABSENCE

9.1 This policy cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary on occasion to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences.

9.2 Some Key Points:

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school.
- Whilst it is right that schools and academies should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems the aim should always be to expect regular attendance.
- Lateness shall be actively discouraged.
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) it must be treated as unauthorised and the register recorded accordingly.
- Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered.
- Explanations such as minding the house, birthdays, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence.
- Even when an absence is authorised, schools should be alerted to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.
- In promoting regular attendance, schools should work closely with appropriate education department staff.

10 PUNCTUALITY

- 10.1 It is Kader Academy's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather), the Academy may keep registers open for a reasonable period.
- 10.2 For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line shall be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.
- 10.3 Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted. Anyone arriving late must report to the office. Office staff and the Attendance Team will be there to challenge the lateness. Office staff will amend the child's presence on the electronic register.
- 10.4 In responding to lateness, the Academy will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. The Academy's Attendance Officer /paid Education Welfare Officer may need to seek an early meeting with parents of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time without valid reason whilst keeping the Head Teacher informed. If the parents do not have any valid reason for the child's persistent lateness the Academy's Attendance Officer/paid Education Welfare Officer will consult with the Local Authority.

11 ROLE OF THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER/ PAID EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

11.1 At the time of writing this policy the Academy's Education Welfare Officer role is held by Roz Pickersgill of Education Welfare Ltd, with whom the Academy has a Service Level Agreement.

11.2 The role of the Academy's designated Attendance Officer/ paid Education Welfare Officer is to:

- Liaise, where appropriate, between home and school.
- Investigate irregular attendance or lateness that may rise to concerns that a child may be at risk.
- Complete a regular register check.
- Provide advice and support to parents through the initiation of attendance procedures.
- Work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality, especially those who are preparing to transfer to secondary school.
- Assist the academy in setting attendance targets.
- Follow Local Authority attendance procedures through to prosecution and possible court action.

12 REFERRAL TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

- 12.1 Referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service will be made in the following circumstances:
- The absence is unauthorised, regular and/or repeated and therefore affecting the child's education.
 - The intervention by the Academy has failed to secure a pupil's regular attendance.
 - The intervention by the Academy has failed to secure a pupil's punctual attendance.
- 12.2 Referrals can only be made after discussion with the Head or Deputy Head Teacher. A referral form will be completed for each pupil and given to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service.
- 12.3 When making a referral to the Local Authority, the following information may be included:
- Action taken to date by the Academy.
 - Parents'/Pupils' attitudes towards the Academy and the Academy's intervention.
 - Parental reasons for non-attendance.
 - Action taken by the Academy to resolve any identified problems.
 - Information regarding any special educational needs the pupils may have, academic attainments and support being provided by the Academy.
 - Information regarding potential aggression from the parents.

13 ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

13.1 Intervention at School Level

Stage 1 – Monitor

13.2 All pupils with less than 95% attendance are regularly monitored on a weekly basis by the Academy's Attendance Officer and paid Education Welfare Officer.

13.3 The class teacher has primary responsibility for monitoring attendance of the pupils in the class group and for collecting notes explaining absence, maintaining an accurate register and informing the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher and/or someone from the Academy's Attendance Team with concerns about attendance and punctuality.

13.4 Where possible Kader Academy operates a first day response to absence system, and where this has failed to make contact with the parent of the absent child a home visit maybe the next step.

Stage 2 – Attendance Concerns

13.5 Home is contacted by phone if the Academy's office staff do not receive a reason for absence by 9.30am.

13.6 A record is kept by the Academy of all contacts and conversations relating to reasons for absence from school.

13.7 Parents are encouraged to visit the school to discuss attendance and strategies to improve, with the Academy's Attendance Officer/ paid Education Welfare Officer.

13.8 Where attendance falls below 90% the paid Education Welfare Officer discusses the pupil with the Academy's Attendance Team and/or Head Teacher. The parent will be invited in to meet with the Education welfare Officer. It is important to establish the reason for poor attendance, the general health of the pupil, home circumstances etc. The parent will then be involved in writing an Attendance Plan and given a target to improve the pupil's attendance, to be achieved over an agreed timescale, which is higher than their normal attendance rate. Attendance for that pupil is then monitored for the duration of the plan and appropriate action taken if attendance remains a concern.

13.9 If attendance has not improved then options include:

- Contact home to discuss attendance either by letter or phone. If contacted by phone or in person areas of concern should be discussed with the parent and appropriate advice and support offered. For example, if the parent reports absence to be due to a recurring medical condition such as asthma the academy could offer assistance by putting the parent in touch with the School Health Service and suggesting a referral.

- Referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service which may result in a Penalty Notice. The Local Authority will decide to issue penalty notice fines to parents.

13.10 The Education Welfare Officer will prioritise the list of pupils to be referred to the Middlesbrough Local Authority Education Welfare Service. These circumstances include:

- When Kader Academy, despite several attempts by phone and also by letter is unable to make contact with the parent.
- If attendance continues to cause concern and the absence is unauthorised.
- When Kader Academy has offered all support available but attendance fails to improve.
- When the Academy has reason not to accept the parents' justification for absence on a regular basis.

14 REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

- 14.1 As well as taking appropriate action against parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children, the Academy will take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality.

Rewards & Incentives

- 14.2 A certificate shall be presented, at the end of each term to children who have achieved 100% attendance for that term.
- 14.3 A certificate will, be presented, in assembly, to children who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole of the academic year.
