



**The Kite  
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Trust**  
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# **KITE ACADEMY TRUST**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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# 1 Introduction

The Kite Academy Trust is committed to developing and implementing policies and practice which support good attendance, in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and governors, and with other organisations who have an interest in, or are affected by, attendance. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, regular attendance is essential. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and arrive on time. We will consistently work with parents and pupils to achieve our expectation of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance; this may include letters, newsletters, half termly/termly updates and through the academy Facebook page. Each year, our academies will examine their attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. The Trust and its academies will review their systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that the goals set are achieved.

Whilst we recognise that children who may attend one of our Nursery provisions are not yet of statutory school age, to ensure we fulfil our safeguarding and child protection duties, we will apply the principles and protocols included within this policy to all children within the Kite Academy Trust.

# 2 Academy Procedures

Any child who is absent at morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of academy). Only the Head Teacher, or a member of the senior leadership team with delegated responsibility, can authorise a child's absence from school. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

# 3 Responsibilities

## Responsibilities of Academy Staff:

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately;
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence;
- Support pupils who have been absent to engage with their learning once they return;
- Regularly inform parents of the attendance of their children;
- Work in partnership with the Trust's Inclusion Welfare Officer and county Inclusion Services;
- Advise parent/carer if their child has arrived late alone and registered themselves at the office;
- Communicate regular attendance updates with all parents and carers.

## Responsibilities of Pupils:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;
- Arrive on time;
- Registering with the office if they are late (KS2 children).

## Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

## Parents and Carers will:

- Encourage regular attendance by supporting the values of good attendance at home and to be aware of their legal responsibilities;

- Inform the academy by telephone on the first day of their child's absence by 8.30am and on any subsequent days provide the academy with a further update;
- Alert the academy office of any planned absences/medical procedures well in advance;
- Support the academy with their child in achieving 100% attendance each year;
- Avoid taking their child out of academy for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance;
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at the academy punctually and prepared for the academy day (including extra-curricular activities).

**PLEASE NOTE: Holidays are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.**

## 4 Lateness

Pupils arriving after the start of the academy day but before the end of registration will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late before registers close. Arrival after registers close will be marked as unauthorised absence.

At Kite Academy Trust academies, the registers close 20 minutes after the official start time of each academy.

## 5 First Day Absence

Parents are expected to contact the academy via telephone (or email) as early as possible and always by 8:30am, leaving an appropriate message. This information will be collated and the registers adjusted to reflect the information. If the academy has not received an update from a parent or carer, a phone call home will be made immediately following the close of registration.

Academy opening times are available within Appendix A. If we are not able to make contact, we will contact all emergency contacts. If we are still unable to make contact, we may make a doorstep welfare check and following this, offer further support. Each academy has a detailed overview of our first day absence protocols in our Attendance Best Practice document.

## 6 Frequent & Continuing Absence

We ask that all parents and carers contact us with a daily update should their child continue to be absent from school. If the school does not receive an update, a courtesy phone call home will be made. If we are unable to make contact, we will follow the protocols in our Attendance Best Practice document and, as above, this will include calling all emergency contacts and could result in a doorstep welfare check.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of lateness or absence, the academy will try to resolve the problem quickly by meeting with the parent/carers. The academy will seek advice from the Inclusion Welfare Officer, linked Inclusion Officer (formally Education Welfare Officer) or Early Help Hub.

## 7 Persistent Absence

If a child's attendance falls below 90% across the academic year, for whatever reason, they are defined as a *persistent absentee*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

Throughout the school year, following fortnightly attendance reviews, the school will contact you if your child's absence falls below 95%. If your child's attendance level is falling towards 90% after the first half term, we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, may ask for medical evidence or suggest a meeting with the Head Teacher or relevant staff member.

## 8 Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## 9 Promoting Attendance

The academy will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education and that good attendance is vital. The academy will be particularly sensitive to the need to support families where attendance issues are related to a pupil's special needs.

## 10 Request for Absence in Term Time

Requests for absence during term time are actively discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The academy will not authorise term time absences, except in very exceptional circumstances. A Request for Leave of Absence form (Appendix B) must be submitted to the academy **at least two weeks in advance**. The academy Head Teacher will then decide if the request can be authorised or if it is unauthorised. A warning letter will then be shared with families for any unauthorised absence so that they are aware that future absence may cause a fine.

## 11 Understanding Types of Absence

Pupils are expected to attend the academy every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

There are two main categories of absences:

**Authorised absence** is when the academy has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory (see Appendix C for absence guidance).

This requires a Request for Leave of Absence Form (see Appendix B) to be completed and returned at least two weeks in advance of the absence to enable the Head Teacher to reach a decision about such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

**Unauthorised absence** is when the academy has not received a valid reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence following a parent/carer's request.

This includes parents giving their children permission to be absent unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings or absences which have not been explained.

If you do not request and/or receive permission for your child to be absent, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

An academy can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to the academy it is suspected (and there is evidence to prove) that they have been on holiday.

Please note, we are unable to authorise illness absence after or before holiday requests unless there is medical evidence to support this.

**Where there are several siblings across local schools, Head Teachers will always liaise with other leaders in the event of requests for approval of exceptional leave. If a child is absent from school for any reason, the academy or Kite Inclusion Welfare Officer may check attendance at siblings' schools in case patterns of absence arise.**

The academy reserves the right to ask for medical evidence of an illness as stated by the parent/carers.

## Religious observance

At the Kite Academy Trust, we will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. Following DfE guidance, the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, academy staff will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. The academy will expect to be notified by parents in advance if their child/ren will be absent for religious observance. On these occasions, we ask parents to complete a Request for Leave of Absence form (Appendix B).

## 12 Penalty Notices

The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when a penalty notice may be issued:**

Pupils identified by Police and Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, states that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days/10 sessions or more and the leave of absence is without the authority of the Head Teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. These unauthorised absences do not need to be consecutive. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned (e.g. through a warning letter that a fine may be issued as well as reminders in the academy newsletter) that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. A reminder will be circulated to all parents on a termly basis via academy newsletters.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where unauthorised absences or late arrival after the close of registration occurs on 7 occasions in any six-week period (not including school closures). The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

## 13 Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

## 14 Inclusion Welfare Officer

The Kite Academy Trust has an Inclusion Welfare Officer (IWO) who works as part of our Kite Family Hub Team. The role of the Inclusion Welfare Officer is to support academies in maintaining good attendance for all children. Our Inclusion Welfare Officer works alongside academies to monitor attendance and provide support for academies and families at the earliest possible stage of any attendance concern.

## 15 Inclusion Service

To help make sure that every child goes to school regularly and gets an appropriate education, each academy has an Inclusion Officer (Surrey academies) or Attendance Intervention Officer (Hampshire academies) from the Local Authority. As part of their role, they can act on enquiries from schools, other organisations, parents and members of the public.

Where a child's absence from the academy gives cause for concern, the Inclusion Officer/Attendance Intervention Officer works with everyone involved to create an action plan supporting full-time attendance and will stay involved until this is achieved. Penalty Notices may be issued in cases of poor attendance. Legal action may be taken to ensure your child attends their academy.

## 16 Changing Schools

An in-year transfer form is available from the academy office and should be completed by the parent and Head Teacher prior to transfer. Pupils' records are sent to the new school within 5 days. The academy office team will confirm attendance with the new school (on the start date) in order to ensure the registers and numbers on roll at both schools are accurate. If the child fails to attend their new school on the agreed start date, the family will be contacted and may be referred to the Local Authority tracking officer.

## Document Management

<b>Document ID:</b>	P1102		
<b>Last Review:</b>	October 2023	<b>Review Period:</b>	3 years
<b>Responsibility of:</b>	Executive Headteachers	<b>Ratified by:</b>	Trustees (18.10.23)

## Appendix A - Times of the Academy Day



### The Grove Academy

At The Grove Academy, the school gates open at 8.30 am.

Classroom/Main doors open at 8.35 am and close at 8.45 am.

All pupils are expected to be in school, settled and ready for registration to start at 8.45 am.

The Academy gates close at 9.00 am.

Any child arriving after registration has started (8.45 am) is required to go to the academy office or enter the building via the Academy Office.

If accompanied to the ACADEMY OFFICE, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then walk, or be escorted, to their classroom.

All registers at the academy are closed at 9.05 am.

Pupils arriving after 8.45 am but before the close of registration (9.05 am) will be marked as late; this is recorded using the L code.

After 9.05 am, pupils will be marked as absent for the morning session; this is recorded using the U code.

Parents will be contacted and asked to provide a reason for this absence.

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## Appendix B - Request for Leave of Absence Form

Parents are asked to consider very carefully the implications for their own child and others before making a decision to remove their child from the education that is provided in academy term time. Children should only be removed in **exceptional circumstances**. These circumstances and the factors to be taken into account by parents considering such absence are given overleaf. If you intend for your child to be absent, please complete the form below and submit to the academy with **at least two weeks' notice**.

The academy is required to record all absences as **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. The decision is based on the information given below. Should a parent who is considering an absence wish to discuss the implications, please contact the academy office to make an appointment to see the Head Teacher.

The Kite Academy Trust follows Local Authority guidelines regarding Penalty Notices. Penalty Notices are issued in instances of unauthorised leave of absence in term time of 5 days/10 sessions (or more) within the preceding designated period (this need not be consecutive) without the authorisation of the school.

Please see [Code of Conduct \(Surrey\)](#) or [Code of Conduct \(Hampshire\)](#) for information specific to your Local Authority.

The Penalty Notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, per period of absence if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in a summons being served to appear at the Magistrates Court.

**Please indicate which academy:**

 Cross Farm <input type="checkbox"/>	 The Ferns <input type="checkbox"/>	 Folly Hill <input type="checkbox"/>	 The Grove <input type="checkbox"/>	 Hale <input type="checkbox"/>
 Holly Lodge <input type="checkbox"/>	 Lakeside <input type="checkbox"/>	 Mytchett <input type="checkbox"/>	 Sandringham <input type="checkbox"/>	 Wyke <input type="checkbox"/>

**Please complete the following after you have read the attached guidance, and send to the academy office:**

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Absence(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Total number of days: \_\_\_\_\_

**For appointments during the school day:**

Time of Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_ Time child to be collected: \_\_\_\_\_ Time child will return: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please tick the appropriate box for the type of absence and give the reason for this absence request below:**

Medical/Dental appointment	<i>Authorised</i>	Religious Observance	<i>Authorised</i>	
Interview/Visit to another school	<i>Authorised</i>	Holiday	<i>Unauthorised</i>	
Special Occasion (please specify reasons below)	<i>Usually Unauthorised</i>	Compassionate Leave (please specify reasons below)	<i>May be authorised</i>	

*\*If you are taking your child out of school for a medical appointment, you will need to provide a copy of the appointment letter/text*

Reason for absence request: \_\_\_\_\_

I have considered the implications for both my child and others in making this decision.

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

For Academy Use: **Authorised**  **Unauthorised**

Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Head Teacher**

## Guidance for Parents on Pupil Attendance

We recognise that there are some genuine difficulties and tensions for parents when they make a decision to take their child out of school. The following information is offered to help.

### Why keep your child in school?

Some areas to consider are:

- Children have a right to the education that is planned and provided by school;
- Taking a child out of school can be disruptive to the child concerned both at the time, before and after the event;
- Children away from school miss the learning that has been planned. Many learning experiences cannot be packaged and sent home and are part of ongoing programmes. For this reason, children's progress may be interrupted;
- Confidence and self-esteem may be dented as some children can feel separated from their class because the experiences of the class have moved forward without them;
- A high number of absences in a class impact on the general level and pace of learning. Teaching may need to be adjusted for the whole class as foundations for the next stage may have been undermined by the absence of several children;
- There are 175 non-school days a year to spend on holidays, shopping and appointments. There are 190 school days a year.

### Why take your child out of school?

There may be genuinely exceptional reasons for taking a child out of school as listed overleaf. The Kite Academy Trust policy is that absence for other reasons is not authorised.

If, after taking all the factors above into account, parents decide to take their child out of school for other than exceptional reasons as described, the parents should take responsibility for this decision and appreciate that their child's absence will be regarded as Unauthorised.

All of The Kite Academy Trust academies seek to provide the very best learning experience for your children and this principle is behind our policy on time out of academies. We hope this is helpful and our Head Teachers are very happy to discuss individual circumstances with you.

Advice and support are available from The Kite Academy Trust Inclusion Welfare Officer or by contacting your Local Authority Education Office.

## Appendix C - Absence Guidance

### **Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling:**

The legislation requires that all children, from babies until they cease to be of compulsory school age, be licensed by the Local Authority in which they live, when they take part in a performance on stage or in a broadcast.

A child remains subject to these regulations until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they turn 16. The academic year runs from 1 September – 31 August inclusive.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head Teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

### **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport:**

Parents of able sports players can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head Teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

### **My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the academy, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding the academy for a number of reasons: difficulties with work; friendship problems; family difficulties. It is important that the reason for your child's reluctance to attend the academy is identified early and work together to tackle the problem. For some children the extra support of familiar staff may be called upon. In addition, it may also be helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

### **What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education. Let them know that there is support at the academy, either from their class teacher or other trusted adults. Encourage them to seek out a member of staff who they feel comfortable with to talk through any worries or concerns that they have which is preventing them from coming to the academy or as a parent/carer, contact the academy and request this on your child's behalf.

Be interested in what your child is doing, chat to them about the things they have learnt, the friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!