

**IDE HILL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**MARCH 2024**

**TO BE REVIEWED: MARCH 2028**

Signed by:  Date: 19/06/2024

Headteacher: Miss Elizabeth Alexander



Signed by:

Co-Headteacher: Miss Johnson Date 19/06/2024



Signed by: Date: 19/06/2024

Chair of Governors: Mrs Anne Fletcher

At Ide Hill CE Primary School, our ethos and vision "Do everything in love" shapes all that we do. We aim for children to form a positive attitude towards school and positive attendance. Our values of Love, Respect and Responsibility support us in our aim for all children to develop a love of God, a love learning, a love of everyone and a love of life.

Ide Hill Church of England Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of our pupils. The Governors, Head Teacher and staff recognise that there is a direct link between regular attendance and good academic performance. It is our aim that all pupils will reach their full potential both academically and socially. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Our school actively promotes 100% attendance for all of our pupils and we use a variety of rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play in giving your child a good start in life, and a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance. We promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.

Ide Hill CE School is a Rights Respecting School. We recognise the following Rights on the Convention of the child:

Article 28 : Every child has the right to an education.

Article 29 : Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 31 : Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities

Article 19 : Every child has the right to be safe and cared for.

**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 8:55 am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

**The Role of the School Staff**

At Ide Hill School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues and contacting parents to notify them of poor attendance.

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 as present or no reason given and the school office is responsible for contacting parents by 9:30am using the ‘first call system’ to find out why the child is not in school. The office will then enter the correct coding on the school system.

The class teacher will notify the Headteacher of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of (Attendance 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. This is called the ‘first call’ system.
* Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
* The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
* Parents are informed termly of the child’s attendance figure

**Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance**

* **95 - 100% attendance:** the school office to investigate and notify the Headteacher.
* **90 - 95% attendance** – the Headteacher to contact 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.

**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.

**Lateness**

At the register is taken at 0am and 1:00pm. 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 9:15 am and 1:30 pm. 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 a period of 15 school days, during which the child must be present for every session.
* 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

**Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. The Headteacher must use a consistent approach and is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. If no explanation is received from a parent, absences will not be authorised

Absence 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
* Visiting Family
* Child’s/family birthday
* Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ circumstances are that the absence is **rare**, **significant**, **unavoidable** **and short.** **In this context, 'unavoidable' implies an event that could not reasonably be scheduled during school holiday time.**

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will 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.

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.

**Persistent unauthorised absence**

 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.

**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)

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 will 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.

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