



Kiwi Primary School



Attendance Policy

September 2026



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Attendance Policy and Procedures

This policy has been developed with regard to the DfE statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Aims of the Attendance Policy

We believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

At Kiwi Primary School we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through regular communications with parents
- Include attendance information in individual annual reports (summer term each year) including statistics and how any absence may be affecting attainment
- Work with parents/carers and pupils to achieve maximum attendance

At Kiwi Primary School we expect:

- Pupils to arrive at school every day on time
- Parents to work with the school to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually

Attendance: The Legal Framework – roles and responsibilities

The law states that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school may be issued with a Penalty Notice or referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for prosecution in the magistrates' court.

To avoid this happening, we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance.

Authorised absences are those that have been agreed by the headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those where no valid reason has been provided for absence or those absences which the headteacher has not agreed.



Partnership Working – roles and responsibilities

Research suggests that a pupil who misses 17 days of school a year will drop 1 GCSE grade in attainment. (DfE)

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year

90% equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year

80% equates to one whole day off every week in a school year

A secondary age pupil whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school

“Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education.” The National Audit Office.

At Kiwi Primary School attendance is the business of everyone in our school community.

The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

We expect that parents and carers will work with us if school absence becomes a concern. Parents and carers can help to promote positive attendance by:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time, before registers close, appropriately dressed and in a ‘condition to learn’ (ie not too tired or too hungry) and with the right equipment for the day
- Working in partnership with us to help their child(ren) gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with us to take an active interest in their child’s education
- Working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child’s attendance

Named roles and responsibilities

- Senior Attendance Champion: Laura Eatherington (Headteacher) — overall strategic responsibility for attendance, chairing attendance review meetings, monitoring, and liaising with the LA Attendance Support Team.
- Designated member of staff for attendance and first point of contact: Laura Eatherington (Headteacher).
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Laura Eatherington — leads on safeguarding-related absence concerns and multi-agency liaison.
- Headteacher: responsible for policy implementation, authorising leave of absence in line with policy and making final decisions on authorisation.



- Admin Team: responsible for daily first-day contact, maintaining registers and initial data recording.
- Governing Body Attendance Lead: Kathleen Taylor — responsible for governor oversight, receiving termly reports and holding leaders to account.

Procedures

Our school attendance target is 96%.

This means that we are expecting each pupil to have as close to 100% attendance as possible. Pupils who miss just 3 days of school in a school year will contribute to the school not achieving the attendance target set by the governing board.

Legally the school register must be taken twice a day.

At Kiwi Primary School the day to day attendance routine is as follows:

- Gates open 8.30 am
- Doors open at 8.40 am
- Morning registers are open from 8.45 am to 9.05 am
- Afternoon registers are open from 12.55 pm to 1.05 pm
- The end of the school day for all children is 3.10 pm

Pupils arriving after registers open and before registers close will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Attendance coding, record keeping and register amendments

- The school keeps admission and attendance registers electronically and in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Registers are taken at the same time each session and preserved for a minimum of 6 years.
- Any amendment to a register will show the original entry, the reason for change, the date and the author of the amendment.
- The school uses DfE national attendance codes and will record the most accurate code at the time the reason is known. Where the reason is not established within 5 school days, code O (unauthorised absence) or the regulatory equivalent will be applied in line with Regulations.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised absence. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.



First-day response and escalation pathway

To ensure the safety and welfare of pupils and support timely return to school, the school operates the following escalation model:

- Day 1: Parents must notify the school before the start of the school day if their child is unable to attend, with a reason. The admin team will telephone parents by 09:30 if no contact has been received.
- Day 3: If no contact has been established and the child remains absent, a home visit/welfare check will be made by designated staff to ascertain the child's safety and reason for absence.
- Day 5: persistent concerns: If absence continues or patterns of absence are emerging, the school will convene an attendance meeting with parents/carers, the Senior Attendance Champion and relevant staff to agree support actions and consider an Attendance Contract.
- Day 10: If unexplained absence persists and there is no contact, the school will notify the Local Authority and follow Children Missing from Education (CME) procedures. The Local Authority may make enquiries and visits via their CME/EWO processes.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

- A pupil's attendance falls below 92%,
- A pupil has more than 3 weeks where they haven't achieved full attendance in a term (In Wiltshire there are 6 terms in an academic year),
- A pupil has a regular pattern of absence.

Parents are asked to:

- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence. Parents should make contact with school before the start of the school day. Please phone the school office on 01980 632364.
- Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school.
- Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours unless there is urgent need for an appointment. If children are taken from school for medical or dental appointments inside school hours parents must show a member of admin staff written confirmation of the appointment.
- Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival.
- Only request leave of absence/holiday in term time if it is for an exceptional circumstance.



Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents
- Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell unless not doing so will breach guidance and legislation relating to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Head Teacher
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration)
- Truancy
- Death of a pet

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent and the parent/carer has not advised that the child will not be in school. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an un-notified absence. The admin team will initially phone parents within an hour of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers then we will make contact with nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff, to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.

Collecting your child from school

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3.10pm.

If parents are unable to collect their child as usual, then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school. We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of.

If children remain uncollected from school the protocol is to contact parents. If parents or designated contacts for children held on file are unable to be contacted we have a responsibility to follow our safeguarding procedure and protocols which may involve contacting the MASH team.



Monitoring attendance

Weekly monitoring of the registers will be made by the admin team, and termly monitoring will be completed by Laura Eatherington, to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), Severe Absence (SA) patterns and levels of broken weeks, lateness, authorised absence and unauthorised absence and reasons for absence.

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year and as a severe absentee if they miss more than 50% of schooling for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment.

Data use and reporting

- Weekly and termly attendance reports will be produced and include: overall attendance, persistent absence rates, broken weeks, late arrivals, and analysis by key cohorts (Resource Base pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils with social workers, FSM, EAL, and military families).
- Termly attendance reports will be provided to SLT and governors. Attendance will be a standing agenda item at governor meetings and the designated governor for attendance will provide challenge and oversight.
- Attendance targets and improvement actions will be included in the school improvement plan and progress will be reported to governors termly.

Targeted support and multi-agency working

Where a child's attendance falls below 90% or shows a pattern, the school will convene a meeting with parents and relevant partners (e.g. LA Attendance Support Team, SENDCo, school health, Armed Forces Liaison where applicable). The school will use Attendance Contracts and, where appropriate, refer to the LA School Attendance Support Team for Targeting Support Meetings and other interventions as set out in DfE guidance.

The school will consider a range of supportive measures including:

- Family meetings and bespoke support plans
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND agreed with the SENDCo
- Referral to school nursing or other health services
- Liaison with Armed Forces support where absence relates to deployment or unit orders



- Use of Parenting Contracts and Targeted Support Meetings prior to statutory action

Medical evidence and long-term illness

Schools should not routinely require medical evidence for short-term illness. The school may request evidence where there are repeated or prolonged absences or where there is reasonable doubt about the reason given. Where medical evidence is required, the school will consider a range of evidence (appointment cards, prescriptions, hospital letters) and be flexible in approach.

Part-time timetables and flexi-schooling

Part-time timetables will only be used in exceptional cases for a limited, reviewed period as part of a wider reintegration or health plan and with parent agreement. Flexi-schooling requests will be considered against DfE and LA guidance and approved only where a robust written agreement is in place. All such arrangements will be time-limited, reviewed every 2–4 weeks, and recorded using the appropriate attendance code and recorded with the LA where required.

Requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education guidance, leave of absence from school including for holidays in term-time, may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested.

We do understand that families in our community are mostly serving in the Armed Forces and therefore there are exceptional circumstances in which we may allow term time absence when requests relate to military operations. We may need the serving person's Unit to verify this and it is important that all requests provide full details and reasons that leave cannot be taken in the school holiday period.

Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require two weeks' notice unless the absence is related to an emergency.

We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.

Requests will be considered by the headteacher and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.



Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school.

Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

Where an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, parents will be issued with a penalty notice. This will be in the sum set by the Local Authority in line with national guidance, per parent/carer for each child, but is reduced if paid within the LA's specified early-payment period.

Consequences of persistent and severe absence

At Kiwi Primary School we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns.

If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority.

A school will consider next steps once 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence happens in a rolling 10 week period. Unauthorised absence means any absence not agreed by the school or when parents have not provided explanation.

Penalty notices will be issued to parents/carers of statutory school children only. They will be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for a child's absence from school. This may include parents who do not live with the child. Please note that in education law this responsibility can extend to step-parents or other adults who live in the same place as the child.

Penalty notices and local authority process

- Penalty notices will be issued in line with the Local Authority's code of conduct and the DfE national framework. The LA will consider whether sufficient support has been offered and whether issuing a penalty notice is proportionate.
- The LA's processes include fines, reduced-payment periods, and prosecution where notices are not paid. Non-payment may result in court proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or later applicable legislation.
- The school will work with the LA to ensure support precedes enforcement where appropriate and proportionate.

The Education Welfare Service and LA actions may include:

- 1) The parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice in line with LA policy. If not paid, court action may be initiated.
- 2) The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or other sanctions.



3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Strategies for improving and maintaining good attendance

We are a caring school community where the needs of all pupils are carefully considered.

Kiwi Primary School provides and promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that pupils feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

If there are specific issues which might impact on your child's attendance it is important that you talk to us so that we can support you and your child. You can speak to any member of teaching staff or a member of the senior leadership team if you want support for school attendance concerns.

There may be times when we ask other agencies to become involved to help us understand and work with you to encourage regular school attendance (e.g. Wiltshire Council, school health, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Advisory Service, Medical Needs Reintegration Service). If we feel that this would be helpful we will discuss with you first.

We are very keen to listen to the views of children and parents with regard to attendance matters and we welcome any feedback which helps us to shape how we work with families to address attendance issues and reward excellent attendance.

School-specific considerations – Resource Base and Armed Forces families
Given our high proportion of military families and our 30-place Resource Base, the school will:

- Maintain close liaison with Armed Forces Family Support and Unit contacts when absence relates to deployment, training or relocation and seek verification where necessary.
- Ensure Resource Base pupils' attendance is monitored with SENDCo input and that reasonable adjustments are recorded and shared with families.
- Where frequent moves occur, undertake cross-border checks with previous and receiving LAs and seek timely transfer/dual registration as necessary.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The attendance policy will be reviewed annually by governors and school staff to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community and reflects current DfE and Local Authority guidance. Version and approval date will be recorded on the front page with the date of next review.

All new parents are introduced to the policy and information on attendance in the school prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.



School attendance will feature in the school newsletter and we will advise parents of any changes to policy and procedures. Communications will be made accessible and translated where appropriate.

Governance and reporting

- The governing body will receive termly attendance reports including whole-school and cohort breakdowns, actions taken and impact.
- Governors will have a named governor responsible for attendance and will include attendance as a standing agenda item during school improvement monitoring.

Approved September 2026

Review – September 2027 (or sooner in response to changes in national guidance or local circumstances)