



POT KILN
PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Review Date: Summer 2021

1.Introduction

1.1 Pot Kiln Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils. As there is clear evidence of a link between attendance at school and attainment, we recognise the need to promote excellent attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually can all our pupils take full advantage of the educational opportunities presented to them. This is vital if they are to succeed in their future lives.

1.2 The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: pupils, parents/carers, school staff and governors.

1.3 This policy is based on current government and local authority guidance/statutory regulations. The school will ensure the whole school community know of the policy and have access to it.

2.School's Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 All staff at Pot Kiln have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. Staff will work together to provide an environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 Monitoring attendance - The Assistant Headteacher will lead the school's work in promoting good attendance ensuring that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The School Secretary will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and attendance issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team as soon as a trigger point is reached or earlier where there are other concerns. The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that support is put in place to deal with any attendance issues. The Assistant Headteacher will also meet with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer and share information with them regarding any concerns about a pupil's attendance. Attendance information and reports will be prepared by the School Secretary. Information on attendance will be made readily available to staff and parents/carers. Attendance data will be made available to the Governing Body each term.

3. Registration

3.1 The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom staff are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the codes detailed below

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (Not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. child attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Child not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to children	Not counted in possible attendances

3.2 The register will be called by the class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. The register will be called promptly at the start of each classes morning and afternoon session and will close 10 minutes after.

3.3 Any child not present at this time will be recorded as absent. This absence will be categorised as an 'unauthorised absence' unless leave has been authorised by the school in advance or where a reason for absence is known and is accepted by the school as a legitimate reason for absence. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness. Where a reason for absence is given to the school at a later stage, the register will be amended (if required) so that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable.

3.4 Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

3.5 In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration, and to ensure the safety of pupils teachers will take a register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by classroom staff and urgent measures will be taken to locate the pupil.

3.6 The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

4. Absence

4.1 Pot Kiln Primary School recognises that there are clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. The school recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence may potentially send a message to parents/carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, excluding where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Pot Kiln Primary School will challenge parents/carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean that an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

4.2 Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:-

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance – a pupil is to be educated off site, for example to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority, a pupil is participating in an educational trip or visit authorised by the school, a pupil is involved in an exceptional special event/occasion and permission has been granted by the Headteacher in advance. In authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case as well as the pupil's attendance, attainment, and ability to catch up on missed schooling will also be considered.

(b) in other exceptional circumstances, where permission has been granted by the Headteacher for absence and where the parents/carers with whom the child normally resides have sought permission in advance. In authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case as well as the pupil's attendance, attainment, and ability to catch up on missed schooling will

also be considered.

(c) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(d) where the pupil has a medical appointment and proof of the appointment can be presented (although parents/carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);

(e) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(f) where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong;

(g) where the Local Authority have a duty to make travel arrangements for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty;

(h) where the pupil is of no fixed abode, their parent/carer is engaged in a trade which required them to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

(i) where the pupil has been excluded from the school and no alternative provision has been made;

(j) in other very exceptional circumstances where a request could not have been made in advance (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

4.3 Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:-

- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

5. Collection and Analysis of Data

5.1 The Assistant Headteacher and School Secretary will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Senior Leadership Team, parents/carers and the governing body where appropriate. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance.

5.2 Accurate attendance returns will be made to the Department for Education within the stipulated time frame.

6. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance

6.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Pot Kiln Primary School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in registration groups and shared with parents via the school newsletter and website. The school will celebrate and reward good or improved attendance e.g. by the issue of certificates/badges. Parents/carers are regularly reminded in newsletters and at school meetings about the importance of good attendance. The Attendance Policy will be made available on request and via the school website.

6.2 Pot Kiln Primary School will contact parents where there is a concern regarding the level of attendance or late arrivals at school.

6.3 Pot Kiln Primary School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within the week:- First-day calling -this means that parents/carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent where no explanation for the absence has been received. This phone call will be made by 9:30am. The system helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parent's/carer's knowledge. Where it is not possible to make direct contact with parents/carers a message will be left on the parents/carers telephone(s) and/or a text message sent. If contact has not been made with the parents/carers by 12.00 am the following day, or earlier if there are reasons for concern, school may attempt to contact other people on the child's contact list, visit the family home or contact known family friends to ensure the safeguarding of the children.

6.4 Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence or where staff are particularly concerned, the school will contact parents/carers to notify them of their concerns. A meeting may then be arranged to discuss the reasons for the absences. At the meeting plans will be put in place with the parents/carers and the pupil to resolve any difficulties, to provide appropriate support and to improve the attendance within a specified time limit. This would usually be no more than 4 weeks. It will be explained to parents/carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

6.5 If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all) the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence);
- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;

- Ensure parents and families are made aware of our attendance policy and provide them with support and help guides. Communicate regularly about changes in school and national policy to increase awareness.
- Contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absence, and recording the contact; (on a weekly basis)
- Monitoring the absence of pupils who have attendance below 85 and 90% (on a weekly basis)
- Write to families regularly when attendance falls below 85% and 90%, ensuring that letters are personalised.
- At Pot Kiln this is monitored on a Friday each week.
- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- Promoting regular school attendance for example, contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school. The school office will contact parents as soon as the registers are returned each day.
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils, or classes. This is celebrated in weekly assemblies, with parents present. Individual successes are monitored on attitude trackers and discussed at one to one meetings between teachers and pupils.
- Refer 8 sessions (4 days) of unauthorised absence to education Welfare which may result in a £60 fine. • Monitor and track the attendance of Vulnerable groups including PP, FSM, SEND and others on a weekly basis.
- Ensure that we have a named Governor who is responsible for monitoring attendance.
- Complete a CME form immediately after we learn a child has left the school and forward to Angela Davey at Education Welfare. A pupil remains on roll until we have heard from Angela or the receiving school.
- Endeavour to gain as much information as possible when communicating with leaving families.

7. Lateness and Punctuality

7.1 Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. If they arrive late it is both very disruptive to their own education and to that of others within their class. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Reasons such as woke late, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes will not be classed as a legitimate reason. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

7.2 Pupils who arrive late for school, either before or after the register closes must report to the school office where their parents/carers must give the reason for their lateness which will be recorded in the Late Arrival Book.

7.3 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building at any time. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office to allow staff to register pupils and ascertain their lunchtime requirements. It is VITALLY important that all pupils & parents/carers arriving late follow this procedure.

7.4 For the same reason it is vitally important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) and/or returning to school later in the day complete the required information in the Early Leavers Book held in the school office.

8. Post-registration truancy

8.1 Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour means that the pupil will be potentially vulnerable to harm and will also not be receiving a full-time education. Pot Kiln Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure that it does not happen. If however a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with their parents/carers immediately, inform the local police and establish a search team to locate the pupil.

9. Requests for Leave of Absence

9.1 Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. However, parents do have the right to apply to the school in writing to request leave. Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on the appropriate form by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. Any further evidence supporting the application may be attached to the form. The application must be made well in advance of the intended absence. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval therefore if parents/carers do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. All requests will be considered on an individual basis.

9.2 Pot Kiln Primary School will consider authorising absences for:-

- Parents/carers in the armed forces returning from an overseas placement;
- Parents/carers who are employed by the public services such as Police, Fire and Health whose holiday is rostered and changes are unable to be made;
- Parents/carers who are employed and subject to a strict and un-negotiable annual leave rota and where evidence is provided from a Senior Manager of the Company to this effect;
- Cultural issues for families returning to their homeland;
- Weddings of an immediate family member – for the journey out and return plus a day for the ceremony (3 days);
- Any other family circumstances that the Headteacher believes would necessitate a holiday in term time for the benefit of the whole family.
- Please note that parents/carers who are self-employed will be assessed on an individual basis according to the nature of the self-employment.

9.3 Requests for time off for the following reasons will not be authorised:-

- cheaper cost of a holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation for a holiday;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
- absent parent/grandparent taking the child on holiday;
- a prolonged holiday overlapping with the beginning or end of term;

- holidays received as a gift.

This list is not exhaustive. Pot Kiln Primary School will NOT authorise time off school during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS examinations.

9.4 Pot Kiln Primary School will respond to all absence request forms in writing giving their decision as to whether the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

9.5 ANY period of absence resulting in 4 days or more will automatically result in a fixed term penalty fine. Currently, the charge issued by Suffolk County Council is £60 per parent per child. Therefore if you go to Spain for a week with two pupils who attend our school, you will be issued with a fine of £240.

10. Parents' responsibilities

10.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring that children receive an appropriate and fulltime education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child.) Parents/carers will be supported and encouraged by Pot Kiln Primary School. Section 444 of the Act says:-

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence"

(NB Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

10.2 Pot Kiln Primary School expects parents/carers:-

- To ensure that their child attends the school on all the days available to them;
- To support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum and arriving on time;
- To understand that the school are unable to automatically agree requests for absence;
- To not condone unjustified absence from school.

10.3 Parents/carers will also be expected to:-

- Notify Pot Kiln Primary School on every day of their child's absence 01787 372107. This phone call should be made as early as possible and certainly before 8:30am;
- Send written confirmation of all periods of absence and the reason for the absence on their child's return to school if evidence is needed (e.g. doctor/dentist appointment/ details of medication). In the event that written confirmation is not received at the school one reminder will be made to the parent/carer. Where notification is still not received the absence may be recorded as unauthorised;
- Let the front office know verbally if an absence is known in advance, not to the teachers on the playground where their attention will be on the children.
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;

- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's lives. Pot Kiln Primary School will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

11. Pupils' Responsibilities

11.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school, they should speak to their class teacher in the first instance.

11.2 Pupils should attend all of their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

12. Governors' responsibilities

12.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

13. Conclusion

13.1 School attendance contributes to the health and safety of children and supports children in reaching their maximum potential. Being a member of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute and to be responsible for the well-being of others. Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

FAQS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

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 he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Support your child by helping him/her with any homework he/she may bring home. Attend school meetings which will inform you about how well your child is doing. School bags should be checked every evening for letters so that contact with school is maintained. Remind your child that their attendance will be discussed with their class teachers. Attendance ratings are recorded as follows:

Red	Amber	Green
Below 92%	92-95%	96%+

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

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Welfare Service is based at:

Western Area Education Office
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
IP33 1RX
Tel: 01284 352000

When will the school contact me about my child's attendance?

If your child's attendance is causing concern because:-

- We notice a pattern in absence, e.g certain days or times
- Attendance falls below 90% We will contact you. We will always work with families to offer support, but we do have an obligation to record, track and monitor attendance causing concern and this may result in a referral to Education Welfare. In these cases, we are always acting in the best interests of the child and will seek to resolve any matters that are impacting on attendance.