



Kenningtons Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

This Policy was reviewed by the Pastoral Manger and approved and ratified by the Governing Body on a 1-year cycle. It must be displayed on the school's website.

Date of Approval	24 th September 2026
Review Duration	1 Year
Date of Review	September 2027

Kenningtons Primary Academy

Attendance Policy. September 2026



“Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset” Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026)

“Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates”. Working together to improve school attendance ((DfE, 2026)

This policy is written with support of guidance documents Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026) Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, 2024) and awareness of appropriate legislation and guidance (see Appendix 1).

This policy is written in conjunction with our Child Protection Policy.

Expectations of School regarding attendance

The new Department for Education guidance Working together to improve school attendance ((DfE, 2026) expects all schools:

- to have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.
- to have senior attendance champions on the school’s leadership team
- recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil’s attendance is part of improving the pupil’s overall welfare
- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promote the benefits of high attendance
- to complete admission and registers accurately, and have day to day processes in place to follow up absence
- to regularly monitor and analyse attendance
- to build strong relationships with families
- to work together with all partners such as Parents/Carers and Local Authority (see Appendix 2)

Responsibilities and Expectations of Parents/Carers

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026) states that Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school every day that school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill or being given permission for an absence in advance.

Parents / Carers are expected to

- ensure their child(ren) arrive at school on time, in appropriate uniform, ready to learn
- ensure their child(ren) attend school each day school is open
- provide school with a reason for any absence first thing in the morning using Studybug app (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>).
- liase with the Pastoral Manager for more detailed attendance support (see appendix 6)

- book medical appointments out of school hours and/or provide evidence of appointment if during school time
- provide at least two contact numbers and inform School of any changes of address / proposed change of school and start date
- only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- proactively engage with school and Local Authority regarding any support offered/ signposted; to address their child's barriers to attendance, especially if their child is at risk of becoming persistently absent (has missed 10% or more of school)

Roles and Responsibilities of School Staff

The Governing Body will:

- have regards to both Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) and working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- recognise the importance of school attendance and ensure that school staff fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data and participate in panel meetings with families who need support identifying barriers to attendance.
- agree Attendance policy.

The Headteacher will:

- be Senior Attendance Champion and will set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff and have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- have regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) and working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.
- have awareness of pupils with specific barriers to attendance and consider the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention
- put in place safeguarding responses for a child being absent from school or going missing from school.
- set annual attendance targets
- assign roles to manage and improve attendance
- attend regular attendance panels with families who need support.
- be aware of referrals to the School Attendance Support Team (SAST)
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Refer missing children to the police for support

The Pastoral Manager will:

- have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026) and Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, 2024)
- complete home visits when a child's whereabouts is unknown.
- use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- work with pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance

- recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- action safeguarding responses for a child being absent from school, or going missing from school
- update class teachers with regards to families needing support.
- produce reports as requested focusing on specific pupil groups such as: at risk of becoming persistently absent, persistently absent (PA), severely absent (SA), pupil premium (PP), free school meal (FSM), pupils with a social worker (CWSW).
- signpost and support access to services and/or put targeted services in place to remove any barriers to attendance to prevent pupils becoming persistently absent.
- work with Local Authority as part of agreed joint approach to support all severely absent pupils
- take an active part in any multi-agency work deemed appropriate including working with the Local Authority: School Attendance Support Team (SAST), Social Care.
- be mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

Where engagement in support is proving challenging the Headteacher and/or Pastoral Manager, working together under banner of School senior attendance Champion, and with advice/support of Thurrock SAST, will hold more formal conversations with parents/carers.

These meetings should provide chance for all to listen to and continue to understand the barriers to attendance, and explain the help available to avoid any possible consequences of PA and SA to the pupil / the potential need for legal intervention in future.

Office Staff will:

- have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) regarding children being absent or missing from school.
- action safeguarding responses for a child who is absent from school or is missing from school.
- ensure teaching staff have access to appropriate class registers
- ensure completed registers are received from class teachers in good time.
- notice attendance trends within the school including use of Studybugs app.
- understand that the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
- conduct two 1st day absence calls in the case of non-notified absence and refer with the Pastoral Manager when a response is not obtained.

Class Teachers will:

- conduct registration electronically in Juniper Horizons at start of the morning and start of the afternoon sessions
- raise concerns regarding attendance with the Pastoral Manager
- support pupils where in-school barriers to attendance have been identified
- promote the importance of good attendance
- issue merits each half term to pupils with 100% attendance

Registration Procedures including Punctuality/Lateness

8:45am	School day starts	Duty Teachers are stationed at the entry doors into the school at 8:45am each morning to admit children into the school building
		Parents/Carers are not permitted to enter the building but may pass written notes to the Duty staff member for the Class Teacher.
		Class Teachers will ensure notes are passed onto the school office where appropriate
8:50am		Duty Teachers will be relieved of door duty by the Duty TA at 8:50am.
8:55am	School doors shut	Duty TA will shut and secured at 8:55am. Any pupils who arrive after this time are considered to be late and must be directed to the school office. Code L will be attendance code if a child has arrived late, but before the register has closed. Office staff record time of arrival and reason for lateness onto Juniper Horizon
		The register is a legal document and can only be taken by a member of Staff. School uses national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations.
8:55am	Register taken	Morning register is taken electronically in Juniper Horizon at 8:55am. A paper copy must be used if Juniper Horizon is not available. This must be sent straight to the office.
		Registers are open for 30 minutes. Pupils arriving after 9:25am time must be directed to the school office and are recorded as late
9:25am	Register closed	Pupils arriving after 9:25am time must be directed to the school office. Code U will be attendance code if a pupil has arrived late / after the register has closed. Office staff record time of arrival and reason for lateness onto Juniper Horizon. This entry is classed as an unauthorised absence.
12:55pm	Register taken	Afternoon register is taken electronically in Juniper Horizon at 12:55pm. A paper copy must be used if Juniper Horizon is not available. This must be sent straight to the office.
		Pupils returning for the afternoon session must arrive by 12:50pm and arriving later than this will result in a late mark.
3:15pm	School day ends	

Categories of Absence

Parents/Carers may not authorise absence, absence is authorised by the Headteacher. All codes entered onto the Juniper Horizons register are in line with Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026)

Illness

Parents/Carers should notify school on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness (either physical or mental health related). This should be done via the Studybugs app. The school will authorise absence due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of the illness.

The school can request Parents/Carers provide medical evidence to support illness. The school will record the absence as unauthorised if the requested medical evidence is not produced. Medical evidence can be a doctor's certificate, sight of the medicine bottle, appointment card or copy of the prescription. If Parents/Carers inform the school that they are unable to provide evidence due to an ongoing illness the school may, with written parental consent, write to the doctor and request evidence.

- **Medical and dental appointments**

Parents/Carers should endeavour to make their child's medical appointments outside of school hours and/or provide evidence of appointment if during school time. A medical appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

- **Term time holiday**

Requests for period of absence for purpose of a holiday will not be authorised. Any holiday or block of absence taken during term time will be recorded as Code G: Please be aware that code for approved family holiday was removed by DfE August 2025.

- **Special occasions**

Parents/Carers should write a letter to the Headteacher explaining the circumstances. Each request will be treated individually. Please note in the majority of cases absences of this nature will not be authorised.

- **Family bereavement**

We will respond sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or associated events. Parents/Carers should write to the Headteacher explaining the circumstances.

- **Being educated offsite**

This code is used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by School.

Suspension / Exclusion

Suspension / exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. If a pupil is found alone in a public place during a period of exclusion a Penalty Notice may be by Thurrock Council.

Penalty Notices

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026) guidance explains that "improving attendance is everyone's business". It states that schools will work with pupils and families, the local authority and other partners to identify barriers to good attendance and offer support as appropriate.

When this offer of support fails to improve attendance statutory action may become necessary and the Thurrock Council Code of Conduct (August, 2025) sets out the circumstances in which a Penalty Notice application can be made.

Kenningtons Primary Academy has adopted the Thurrock Council Code of Conduct (August 2025) as part of its Attendance Policy (see Appendix 3).

From 19 August 2025 Parents/Carers can be issued a Penalty Notice if their child has a total of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any period of 10 weeks.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent, for each child. Legal proceedings will be taken if payment of the Penalty Notice is not made within 28 days.

First Offence	First Penalty Notice per parent, per child, parents/carers must pay: £80 if paid within 21 days / £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
Second Offence	Second Penalty Notice within 3 years per parent, per child, parents/carers must pay: £160 within 28 days
Any other offence within 3 years	Legal proceedings will be taken against you if: your child has any further unauthorised absences within 3 years

Legal proceedings could lead to a higher financial penalty and will result in a criminal record

From SAST Thurrock poster August 2024

Penalty Notices may be applied for

- irregular attendance
- unauthorised leave of absence including for the purpose of a holiday
- when a child that has suspended or excluded is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

When national threshold is met, schools must consider whether to issue a Notice to Improve, (this is currently referred to as the Penalty Notice warning letter)

Registration Codes

- Registration Code / \ Present in school / = am \ = pm
- Code B: attending a place for any other approved educational activity
- Code C: leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code C1 absent for the purpose of participating in regulated performance
- Code C2 leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable
- Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded
- Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for admission to another educational institution
- Code K: Attending education provision arranged by Local Authority

- Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed
- Code M: Medical or dental appointments
- Code N: Reason for absence not yet established (after 5 days becomes Code O)
- Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Code Q: Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code S: for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code T: parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed
- Code V: Educational visit or trip
- Code W: Work experience
- Code X: not of compulsory school age / not required to attend school
- Code Y1: Unable to attend-due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: unable to attend due to part of the school premises closed
- Code Y4: unable to attend due to whole school being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause
- Code Z: prospective pupil not on admission register
- Code #: planned whole school closure

Pupils Moving to a New Address and/or School

Parents/Carers should keep the school informed of any changes or circumstances that may affect their child's attendance such as moving to a new address or a new school. This is to ensure the school complies with its safeguarding responsibilities

Parents/Carers must share full details of the change including the date the child is expected to start at the new school / move to reside at a new address with the school office prior to their child's last day. The school must record these details fully.

There are now scenarios where pupils can be taken off roll – this would only be done in conjunction with Thurrock School Attendance Support Team (SAST). This would include completion of SAST referral and notification to parents of intention to off roll.

Dual Registered Pupils

Pupils attending on a dual registered basis are primarily the responsibility of their home school. Regular contact will be made with the dual rolled school for updates on the pupil's attendance.

EHE – Elective Home Education

If Parents/Carers send written notification to school that they intend to withdraw their child from school to home-educate, school will inform School Attendance Support Team (SAST) immediately, as per SAST advice

Culture of praise

In keeping with new DfE guidance, there will be a culture of praise, identifying and celebrating improvements in attendance.

- merits issued each half term to pupils with 100% attendance
- sending personalised letters to parents/carers and pupils recognising attendance improvement

Appendix 1

This list is taken from page 66 of Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026) which states all other relevant legislation and guidance.

Relevant legislation

The Education Act 1996
 The Children Act 1989
 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
 The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
 The Education and Inspections Act 2006
 The Sentencing Act 2020
 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Relevant government guidance

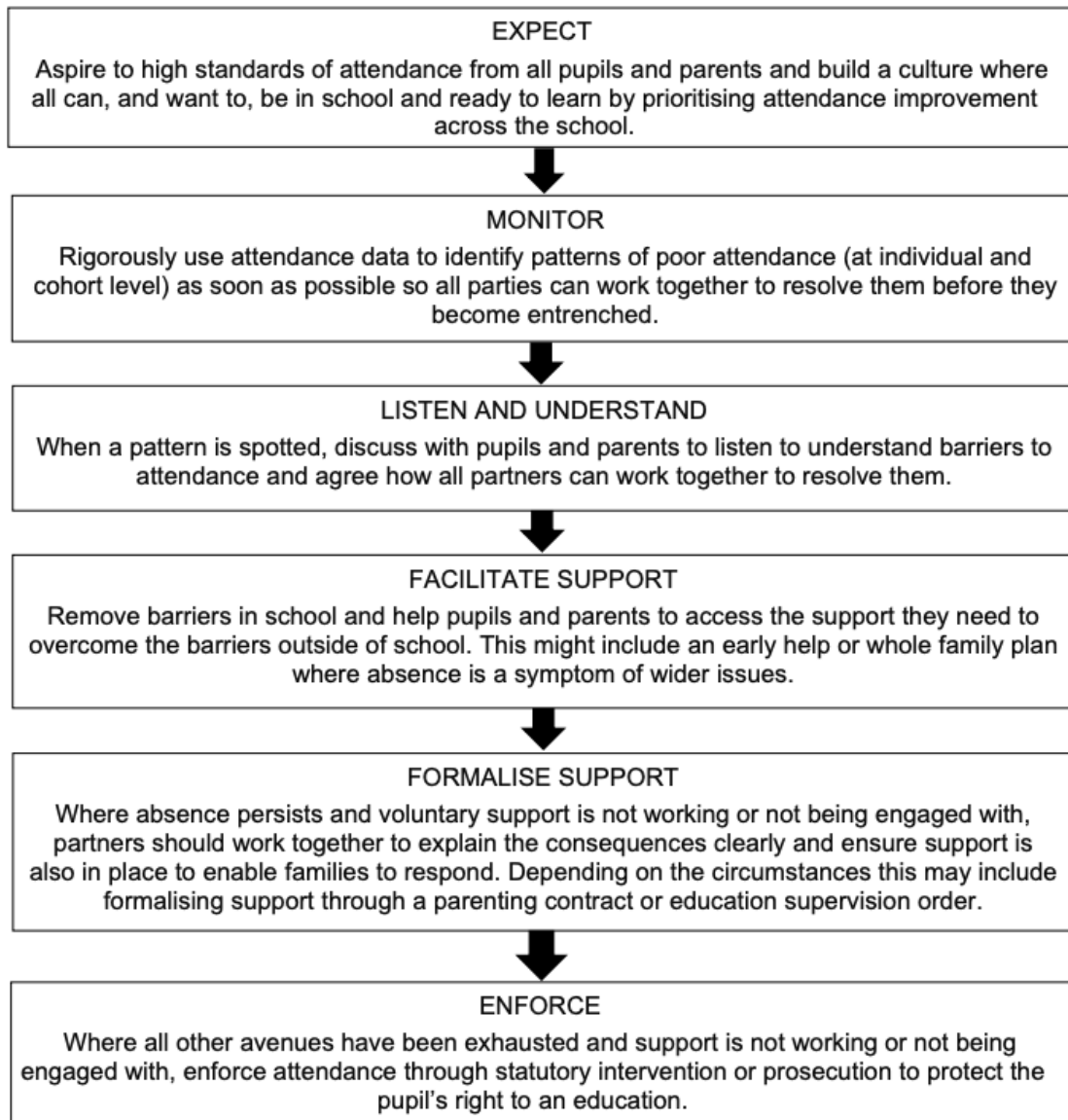
Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour
 Children missing education
 Keeping children safe in education
 Working together to safeguard children
 Elective home education
 Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
 Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
 Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
 Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
 Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
 Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying

Appendix 2

Flow chart identifying how all partners should work together from Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2026)

Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Appendix 3

Link to Thurrock Council Code of conduct for issuing Penalty Notices for school absence

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/unauthorised-absence-penalty-code-2024-v01.pdf>

Appendix 4

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.

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Pastoral Manager and Deputy DSL

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