

Kirk Hallam Community Academy Attendance Policy 2020-2021

1. Statement of Intent

Kirk Hallam Community Academy is committed to ensuring that all scholars receive a full-time education that maximises opportunities for every scholar to achieve excellence. Regular attendance is a prerequisite for scholar achievement. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% for all scholars.

Absence, whether frequent or occasional can lead to academic underperformance, missed experiences, and may cause fractured social relationships, all of which set in motion an increased pattern of non-attendance and greatly hinder prospects and success.

	100% Attendance	No days missed
	95% Attendance	Nine days of absence <i>One week and 4 days of learning missed</i>
	90% Attendance	19 days of absence <i>Three weeks and 4 days of learning missed</i>
	85% Attendance	28 days of absence <i>Five weeks and three days of learning missed</i>

2. Promoting Excellent Attendance

The foundation for excellent attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parent and the scholar. The Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education. As a school we will monitor, intervene and challenge where high levels of attendance and punctuality are not sustained. We will also strive to promote excellent attendance wherever possible and will reward those scholars who maintain this standard.

As a school we will:

- Provide information on matters relating to attendance on our website.
- Promote and celebrate excellent attendance.
- Track, identify, monitor and implement early intervention strategies where attendance and/or punctuality is of concern.
- Maintain an accurate register for each school session as a legal document.
- Make informed decisions as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

As parents you must:

- Ensure your child attends school on time and every day throughout the academic year.
- Inform the school on their first day of absence.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by following the absence procedure.
- Support the school in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- Avoid taking your child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Communicate with the school when any issues arise in relation to attendance.
- Respond to any contact by school staff and any other external agencies regarding attendance.

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.

Scholars must:

- Attend school every day unless they have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all lessons on time.
- Sign out from the reception when leaving the school site during school hours.
- To discuss with staff member any problems that may stop them from attending school.

3. Absence Procedures

A scholar not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on each day of absence and before 9am.
- This should be done by contacting the school reception on 0115 9301522.
- If leaving a message you must provide the scholar's name and reason for absence.
- Follow up with a written communication of the reason is advised.

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact you on the first day of absence via text message or phone if we have not heard from you.
- Where a scholar is absent for 3 days a home visit will be conducted if contact with parents/carers cannot be made.
- If a reasonable explanation for a scholar's absence is not given within 5 days we will mark it as unauthorised.
- Maintain an accurate register for each school session as a legal document.

4. Understanding Types of Absence

All absence from Kirk Hallam Community Academy is classified by the school as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised.' It is the school who determines the categorisation of the absence.

Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is where the school accepts that there is a good reason for a scholar's absence. This may include:

- An absence caused by illness or other unavoidable cause.
- An absence for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- Circumstances where absence may be authorised such as attending a Post 16 interview or a funeral.

If a scholar is persistently absent due to illness we will request medical evidence to support this in order for it to be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An unauthorised absence is one where the school does not consider the reason for absence to be reasonable. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Truancy

- Minding the house or staying in for repairs
- Shopping
- Annual holidays that have not be authorised by the Head of School
- To do homework/coursework
- To assist with the family business
- To care for siblings
- Oversleeping
- Birthdays
- Lateness
- No school uniform

5. Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and is a significant indicator of under-achievement. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as an unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.

The school day starts at:

9am Monday

8.30am Tuesday to Friday

Registers are marked by:

9.10am Monday

8.40am Tuesday to Friday

Your child will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in by this time and will receive an OB detention.

At **9.20am** on a Monday and **9am** Tuesday to Friday the registers will **close**. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after this time, they will receive a mark (U) that shows that they are on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. This means you may face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists.

Official medical evidence must be provided to authorise any lateness to school.

Lesson punctuality is also tracked and monitored closely. Lateness to lesson has a significant impact on learning and causes disruption to other Scholars. If a Scholar is late to a lesson they will be issued with a B1 (please see the Kirk Hallam Behaviour Policy) and will receive a 15 minute detention at the next available time (break, lunch or after school). Persistently poor punctuality will be treated as truancy and will lead to an escalation in consequence.

6. What we will do when attendance is a concern

Even when there are legitimate reasons for absences it is imperative that there is collaboration between school and home to improve attendance. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

Derbyshire County Council stipulates that any child with an attendance of or below 90% is considered to be a persistent absentee. This equates to two days (4 sessions) absence per month. Statistics demonstrate that a persistent absentee is less likely to achieve their full potential.

At Kirk Hallam Community Academy our approach towards tackling attendance is centred around 4 key areas:

1. Tracking
2. Identification
3. Monitoring
4. Early Intervention

Emerging Concern

When a scholar's attendance reaches 95% it becomes an 'Emerging Concern.' At this stage:

- The scholar will be placed in the Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG) where their attendance will be closely observed.
- You will receive a letter outlining that your child has been placed in this group and a parent support sheet.
- This stage may include conversations with scholars and parents to discuss the reasons for absences.

Cause for Concern

When a scholar's attendance reaches 93% it becomes a 'Cause for Concern.' At this stage:

- You will receive a letter outlining your legal responsibility and a copy of the Derbyshire County Council 'School Attendance – The Law' information leaflet for parents.
- You will be invited in for an Attendance Panel Meeting.
- Other interventions may include:
 - The allocation of a Key Worker
 - Conversations and meetings with the scholar
 - Letters and phone calls home
 - Meetings with parents/carers
 - Home visits.
 - Referrals to external agencies
 - Other relevant support

Should there be little or no improvement and attendance has dropped below 90% (with 5 days of unauthorised absence within a 5 week period), legal action may be pursued in the form of a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notice

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act of 2003 introduced legislation for the local authorities to issue a Penalty Notice fine to the parent of a child who has unauthorised absences from school. A Penalty Notice can be issued for the following reasons:

1. If leave is taken during term time without the permission of the Head Teacher.
2. If a scholar has unauthorised absence from school and their parent fails to improve the situation.
3. If a child persistently arrives late after the close of the register.
4. If a child has been excluded and is seen in a public place during school hours without adult supervision.

The fine is £120 to be paid within 28 days but will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. They are issued per parent, per child.

Prosecution

Parents can be prosecuted for issues including:

1. Ongoing unsatisfactory school attendance.
2. Repeated cycles of short term improvement linked to the Penalty Notice process.

3. Unauthorised leave of absence during term time (including holidays) which is excessive in length.
4. Repeated periods of unauthorised leave of absence taken during term time (including holidays)
5. Non-payment of penalty notices

Prosecution takes place in a Magistrates' Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Prosecution could result in a fine of up to £2500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months. The court can also issue a parenting order.

7. Exceptional Leave during Term Time

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form which can be found on our school website and returned to the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/unpaid leave arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

As a school we are committed to ensuring excellent levels of attendance and punctuality through the formation of a strong partnership between all Stakeholders.