

King Edwin Primary & Nursery School



Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

V.3 Reviewed 28.11.25

INTRODUCTION

At King Edwin School, we believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised. Even short periods of absence can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

EXPECTATIONS

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer. Any absences should be explained, verbally or in writing to the teacher concerned with, if possible, the predicted date of return.

At King Edwin School, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. We strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Parents/carers should be aware that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom partaking of the complete lesson sequence. Children can also suffer socially when absent from their peers for any period of time.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents / guardians. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

There is no automatic right to any leave of absence. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time. Each request is individually assessed by the Head Teacher.

The Education Act 2002 places the responsibility for enforcing school attendance on the Local Authority. This responsibility is delegated to Targeted Support.

Legal action will be instigated against parents/carers in relevant circumstances using the wide range of available options including:

- Penalty notices
- School attendance orders
- Section 444 (1) and (1) (a) of the Education Act 2002.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Although the law distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absence, it is the overall attendance of pupils that is crucial. At King Edwin Primary School our current attendance target for children of compulsory school age is 96%. This target is reviewed on an annual basis.

King Edwin School, like all other schools, has a legal duty to publish figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. School staff are committed to working with parents in order to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. This document records whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory age is absent, every session of absence must be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not the parents/carers. It is, therefore, essential that information about the cause of each absence is required, preferably in writing.

Where no notification has been received by 9:30am an automated non-attendance message will be sent via our Schoolcomms system. If there is no response by 10:30am a call will be made by a member of our school office staff to ascertain the whereabouts of the missing child/children. If there is doubt about the whereabouts of any child/ children it may be deemed necessary to make home visits or to call the Police.

At times, some children may be reluctant to attend school. In these situations, school will work closely with the family to nurture a better pattern of attendance. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may perpetuate the situation. Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.

For further information about the monitoring of attendance at King Edwin Primary School, please refer to the Attendance Concern Flowchart in Appendix 4 and the samples of letters which are distributed to parents/carers in Appendices 1-3.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

If we are unable to ascertain a reason for absence when the child returns to school, the parent or carer must explain the absence to a member of staff.

Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, the parent or carer should notify the school prior to the day of absence.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Authorised absence refers to mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or another unavoidable cause. Registers are marked with a relevant code to distinguish between the different reasons for non-attendance.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or carer.

The following will not be authorised:

- Parents keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained (documented evidence will be needed in the case of persistent illness)
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Holidays in term time

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer or have general concerns about the absence. This referral is made to Targeted Support (Notts LA Attendance Officers).

An absence may be classified as unauthorised if there has been a consistent period of absence with the same verbal reason but no additional evidence provided or where a senior member of staff has reason to believe that the reason for absence given is inaccurate.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised.

Where the parents keep the child away for longer than agreed then the extra time is also marked unauthorised.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

Exceptional leave during the school day

Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Children must not be taken out of school without a previously written agreement (unless in an emergency). Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.

On return to school during the day parents must inform the school office staff so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

Parents should inform the school office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

Exceptional leave during term time

Parents taking children out of school for leave during term time is not authorised and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Exceptional Leave of Absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

Requests for exceptional leave

- Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements. The request must be made on an Exceptional Leave of Absence Form which can be obtained from the school office.
- Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.
- Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Headteacher. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer / transition process.

MISSING CHILDREN

If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority Safeguarding procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

LONG-TERM ABSENCE THROUGH CHILD'S ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS

If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Safeguarding

As a school we take all our safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously.

- We recognise that young people can be vulnerable in a number of ways and that the dangers in the online world are as much a threat as those in the real world.
- We have ensured that our staff understand what makes some children and adults more vulnerable to certain risk factors; how to recognise the signs of somebody at risk; and what to do if they have a cause for concern.
- We include in our consideration of risk radicalisation and extremism; female genital mutilation; forced marriage and honour based violence; and child sexual exploitation.
- We will ensure that any changes in behaviour or patterns of attendance are identified quickly and that appropriate action is taken swiftly and is proportionate to the level of concern.
- We will work with the whole school community to ensure all our stakeholders understand our wider safeguarding responsibilities and work in partnership with us to keep our pupils safe.

GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND BUSINESS MANAGERS WHERE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

Child / young person is on roll but not attending

School/Academy to attempt to make contact with family no later than **day 3**, best practice **day 1**.

Days 0-10, School / Academy should continue to make efforts to engage with the family; recording their contact: telephone conversations, texts, e-mails, letters, visits (when appropriate, please discuss with EHU) etc. in a timely fashion.

Whereabouts known but not attending education or engaging with school/academy

Child and Family meet threshold for Early Help through the Family Service (level 3 Pathway to Provision) make a referral to the **Early help Unit**.

Absence meets threshold for Enforcement Action as outlined in the Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct make a referral to the Family Service.

Child stays on roll.

Whereabouts unknown after full efforts to make contact the family

Referral is made to:
Children Missing Officer (CMO)

No later than 10th day when there is no explanation for absence and above checks have been completed.

DO NOT remove from your roll until CMO has completed initial checks and confirmed that they can be removed.

Child moving out of county

Request from the family their **new address** and details of the new school applied for.

Hopefully the new school will contact with you, if not, make contact with them to confirm on roll.

If without a new school within **10 days**, a referral should be made to:

Children Missing Officer (CMO) providing the families new address, contact details and efforts made.

Child is of statutory school age but not on the roll of a school

Direct referral to:

Children Missing Education (CME)

Providing child's name / DOB / Address and details of parent / carers.

Child permanently excluded

LA to be notified on the day of exclusion via e-mail.

The LA will respond and continue to work with you through the process.

DO NOT remove from your roll until advised.

Truancy – school / academy to inform parent/carers that their child/young person is not in school. School risk assess before considering a Police response. (prior checks to be completed and evidenced upon calling the police unless immediate risk evident)

Every child should be accounted for. Their whereabouts should be known or a referral made to the relevant service. Support services are here to help.

Family indicate they are moving abroad

School must request and record details of the new family address and school. You can't remove from your roll without this.

If school does not receive the above a referral should be made to:

Children Missing Officer (CMO)

Looked After Children (LAC)

If a LAC is moving placement and no longer attending, school should liaise with the Virtual School and the child's Social Worker. **DO NOT** remove from roll.

Independent / Residential Schools

The same procedures should be followed as those in School's / Academies

Traveller Children

If a Traveller family indicate that they are going to travel School/Academy should request details of where they will be travelling and when they aim to return.

If they do not arrive to school within 4 weeks of the expected return date. please follow attendance procedures.

School Allocations (intake or in-year admissions rounds)

If allocated and there is not an agreed start date you will need to make efforts to engage (telephone, letter, visit (where appropriate)).

If a child/young person has been allocated a place at your school/academy and they do not arrive on the expected day of arrival you must follow non-attendance procedures.

If a child/young person has made an application to transfer school/academy during the year (outside of the normal intake process), the leaving school must keep them on roll until it has been confirmed by the new school that they have arrived and have been taken on roll.

For children admitted through first admissions round please refer to your summer born guidance.

If allocated children do not arrive PLEASE FOLLOW UP, DO NOT ASSUME they will have gone elsewhere or remained at their previous school!!

Own admission authorities must inform the admissions team of any **enquiry/application** and outcome. This helps identify any vulnerable child requiring a school place and avoids a child being out of school for an undue length of time.

Family indicate they are returning home for family / cultural / health reasons

School will need to consider the circumstances of the absence in deciding which code to use. Parents should provide school with a return date. If the family do not return on this date attendance procedures should be followed.

Health Related Education

If a child has been out of school for 15 days or more due to illness please liaise with the School Nurse and then a referral can be made to:

Health Related Education Team (please contact the Health Related Education Team to discuss a request for their involvement)

Parent/Carers indicate they wish to Home Educate (EHE)

Request must be made in writing, following a conversation between school and parents/carers, with a copy of the letter placed in the school pupil file and a copy of the letter forwarded securely to **EHE**.

School / academy to return EHE 1A and 1B to the EHE Administrator

Then remove the learner from your roll. **DO NOT** remove from your roll if stated without confirmation from the LA. School file to be sent to **EHE** at County Hall via secure mail.

Child who is not in full receipt of education (25hrs)

Information should be shared with the **Fair Access Team**. Levels of provision will be closely monitored and scrutinised.

Useful links: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal/local-authority/attendance> (Nottinghamshire Schools Portal)
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/nottinghamshire-childrens-trust/pathway-to-provision> (P2P)
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/109754/factsheet-summer-born-final-2.pdf> (Summer Born)

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE A CHILD FROM YOUR ROLL UNLESS YOU HAVE RECORDED AND CAN EVIDENCE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- a new **confirmed** destination school and forwarded the pupil file
- referred to the appropriate service i.e. (Early Help / Children Missing Officer / Elective Home Education)

Child / young person **can only** be taken off roll after 20 consecutive days of continuous absence and when both the Local Authority and the School / Academy have exhausted all reasonable attempts to locate the child/family in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations. Referrals must have been made to the CMO or EHU as outlined above. All other deletions breach statutory guidance.

Children Missing Officer will confirm when child / family are found, confirming new school / academy allowing the transfer of pupil file to be arranged.

Days 0-10 and 10-20 are guidelines. If all checks are carried out and evidenced referral to Children Missing Officer could be made earlier.

GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND BUSINESS MANAGERS WHERE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to consider and what information do I need to share when I refer a child/young person?

- Do school have safeguarding concerns? If so, please provide details and contact children's social care if urgent.
- When was the last day the child/young person was in school?
- Have all emergency contacts been exhausted? - addresses, telephone numbers (call / text), e-mail addresses of parents/carers, relatives, friends, work contacts, extended family (abroad if available)
- Have you completed checks with known services? Is the young person open to: CSC, Family Service, SEN, Health/School Nurse, School Admissions, CAFCASS
- Are there known siblings/family members attending another school?
- Have friends in school seen or heard from the young person? (speak to pupils discreetly, consider accessing social media)

Home visits:

- check the property for any signs of life
- leave a note explaining why you are trying to make contact, what your expectations of them are, what actions will be taken should they not make contact
- visit during different times of the day
- have neighbours seen or heard from the family?

What does a home visit involve? What do I need to do?

Home visits will allow you to gain a sense as to whether the family are still living in Nottinghamshire, and if this is an attendance issue or child missing education in that we do not know where the family are. Dependent on how well you know the family this could be completed by a door knock, explaining that you are concerned that the young person is not attending school or if unanswered looking for signs of life, does it appear like the family are still resident?

A colleague passing by the property on their way home from work could look for signs of life. A visit can be done after you have exhausted all the emergency telephone contacts, written to the family etc. – but an early visit may resolve the issue.

If school do not wish to complete a home visit one can be purchased through the Family Service for £50. Please contact your linked Service Manager.

A child/young person has moved out of county and I do not have a new school to forward the pupil file to, what should I do?

If a family has moved out of the area school should request from parent/carers the name of the child's new school and **new family address**. If a school place is not yet obtained please request the address and share this with CMO who will liaise with colleagues in the area who will confirm local applications or arrange a visit to discuss the young person's education whilst in their area. Once confirmed they are known to the new area they become the responsibility of the new LA closing all involvement for Notts. The pupil file can be transferred once a new school is identified.

What should I bear in mind if a parent/carer chooses to home educate?

Although a parent/carer has the legal right to electively home educate, this may not always be in the child's best interests, particularly if there are significant safeguarding, parenting, SEND or other issues. Some parents are not able to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, others have fallen out with the school or have an older school-refusing child. Please remember to consult fully with any agencies involved and the EHE team before deciding to off-roll the child. It is sometimes possible that a more appropriate solution is found than home education.

What do I do if a child is allocated a place at my school and does not arrive? (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/109754/factsheet-summer-born-final-2.pdf>)

If a child has been allocated a place at your school and they do not arrive as expected **they must be placed on the register from the expected date**, please follow your attendance procedures. It is important that these children do not fall through the net. Be mindful of any language barriers. Raise non-attendance with services.

A child is leaving my school and moving abroad, what do I need to record?

For children who move abroad, we would as a minimum, request the address that the child would be living at along with the school they will be attending, without this a referral would need to be made to CMO – we can't record "moved abroad", "left country", "Poland", "USA" etc. without clear confirmation.

If there were safeguarding concerns school would need to raise them without delay.

School would need to consider the reason for the move i.e. is it a planned move? Is it work related? Are there known family abroad? Have parents been open and informative? Have peers spoken to the child via social media since moving abroad etc. (discreetly).

School should request in writing from parents the details of the new address and name of school etc. (school will hopefully have sufficient contact details other than just mum and dad's phone numbers, i.e. friends/family in the UK, e-mail addresses, work contacts etc.)

If there are no safeguarding concerns and school have the above information the pupil file should remain with the UK school. A copy of the most recent reports would be provided to parents to give to the new school.

Where possible we would ask school to make every effort to confirm the young person's attendance at their new school (there is usually a colleague who can speak English), but we would need to be mindful of how we do this (usually via telephone), e-mail would not be secure to share confidential information.

My young person is open to a social worker or attending a refuge do I still need to follow attendance procedures?

It is important that school have a good relationship with social workers, liaising / sharing information accordingly, but continue to follow internal attendance procedures, school should not rely on the child's social worker to inform CMO etc.

When can I remove the young person from my roll?

We would advise that children remain on the school roll until their new school is confirmed or confirmation is received from CMO that the child/young person is known to another local authority with their CME team taking responsibility for the case. This will ensure that the young person does not slip between services/authorities. **Do not phone admissions teams across the country waiting for children to arrive in a school.**

If a child has moved within Nottinghamshire and is living outside of a reasonable distance to travel to their previous school this should be communicated to the CMO.

For missing children please refer to: http://nottinghamshirescb.proceduresonline.com/files/ch_miss_home_care_jt_prot.pdf

We all have a responsibility for a child's attendance, speak to a service, do not assume that somebody else will be dealing with it!

MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub For children at risk of harm or actual harm. 0300 500 80 90 Mash.Safeguarding@nottscc.gcsx.gov.uk	Traveller Advice (not referrals) lorinda.liversidge@nottscc.gov.uk toni.greenway@nottscc.gov.uk	Children Missing Officer (CMO) Glen Scruby 01623 433170 Missing.CME@nottscc.gcsx.gov.uk	Register Queries (Family Service) South: 0115 854 6438 North: 0115 804 1591 West: 0115 8041578
Virtual School – Looked After Children Sue Denholm 0115 804 0644 sue.denholm@nottscc.gov.uk	Exclusions exclusions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk (perm) fixedterm.exclusions@nottscc.gov.uk	Fair Access 0115 977 3679 fairaccess@nottscc.gov.uk	Special Educational Needs Team (SEN) 0115 977 3779 casework.teamleader@nottscc.gov.uk
Elective Home Education (EHE) 01159 772 573 EHE@nottscc.gov.uk	Early Help Unit (EHU) 01623 433500 early.help@nottscc.gov.uk	School Admissions (school use only) 01623 433499 admissions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk	Health Related Education Team 01623 799157 hretoffice@fountaindale.notts.sch.uk