ATTENDANCE GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Why is good school attendance important?

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to supporting a child or young person to flourish, fulfil their potential and enables them to:

- learn
- make and manage friendships
- develop new skills
- have fun
- experience new things in the world around them
- develop awareness and respect of other cultures, religion, ethnicity, and gender differences
- build confidence and self-esteem
- achieve and thrive with a sense of belonging to their school community
- prioritise their well-being and happiness
- be given the best start in life, enabling the best possible choices in their future
- securing school attendance is a legal requirement

Please see the chart below which shows how absence impacts attendance and hours of learning lost. Below 95% begins to cause concern in the number of hours in lost learning. The table below breaks down the percentages of attendance and how many days/hours are lost in an academic year.

1. When does my child need to be in school?

Every child should attend every day that they are required to attend. Your child should be at school by 8.55 a.m. but not before 8.45 am, unless they are attending a breakfast club, to be ready to go into class at 8.55am. The register is taken twice a day. Morning registration is at 9.00 am and afternoon registration is at 1.15 pm. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure they are aware of term dates. Term dates are published on our school website.

2. 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 they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you

value their education. Your child will bring home a school reading book/homework book each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day. Please support your child.

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

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

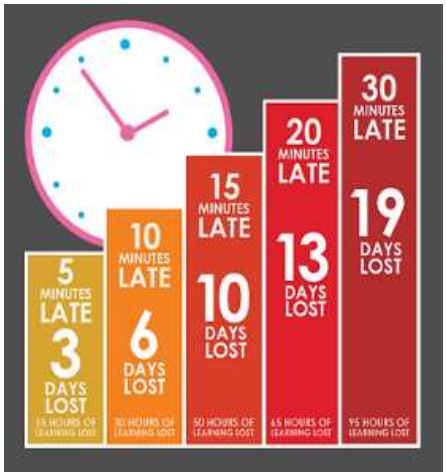
4. Who do I contact if there is a problem?

- The first point of call is the attendance officer Mrs Price who can be contacted by telephoning the school office
- Mrs Bretherton is the attendance champion, senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school and can be contacted via the school office
- For attendance queries and information please see school contacts below:

Email: admin@kington.hereford.sch.uk

5. What happens if my child is late?

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00 am and will be kept open until 9.10 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 pm for EYFS and KS1 or 1.15 pm for KS2 and will be kept open until 1.15 pm and 1.30 pm respectively. Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office. Arriving after the register has closed at 9.10 am is an unauthorised absence. Arriving late can impact on the learning of your child and others in the class, this can equate to days of absence over an academic year.



We want to help families get their child to school on time. Here are some things you can try:

- Have everything you/your child needs for school prepared the night before
- Ensure that your child goes to bed at a reasonable time, so they are not too tired to get up in the morning
- Ensure your child has a good night's sleep by minimising their use of devices at bedtime.

- Have a consistent bedtime routine for your child
- Set an alarm to allow plenty of time for your morning routine in getting to school on time
- Allow extra time for traffic
- Develop back up plans for getting to school if something unexpected comes up. Call on a family member, neighbour, or another parent to take your child to school
- Bring your child to breakfast club

A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer). The school may consider referring to Herefordshire Council for legal action if unauthorised absences continue and parents fail to engage with guidance and support. We wish to avoid this and support you and your child.

6. What should I do if my child is absent? Do I need to write a letter explaining my child's absence, or can I phone or email school?

We expect parents to notify the school every morning of absence by 9.10 am, unless the length of absence is known in advance or a request for a holiday needs to be in writing. We will contact you if your child has not arrived in school by 9.15 a.m. and no message has been left. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence. We have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. You may leave a telephone message on 01544 230363 or e-mail admin@kington.hereford.co.uk

7. Why is it Important to update school with new contact Information?

It is paramount that parent/carers keep school updated with all new contact details of change of address and landline or mobile telephone numbers. If you start a new job and have a work, contact number, please let us know immediately**.** This is to ensure we can contact you in an emergency. Please ensure you provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for your child.

8. First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required every morning. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward to work in partnership with you.

9. Third day absence

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and siblings that attend other schools or educational establishments. At this point we may carry out a home visit to ensure the well-being of the child.

10. Tenth day absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then Herefordshire Council is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children's

Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It would be helpful if you could ensure that we always have an up-to-date contact number and notify us of any change of address or circumstances.

11. Fifteen consecutive or cumulative days absence using Code I Only

Schools are legally required to notify Herefordshire Council where pupils are coded I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

12. What happens if my child continues to be absent?

A member of the attendance team will meet with pupils, and their families whose attendance is a cause for concern. Where necessary, home visits may be made to discuss ways attendance could be improved and the barriers that may need removing. This may be supported by the Education Welfare Officer

This could include:

- Agreeing an attendance support plan
- Signposting to outside agencies

In situations of persistent truanting, a parent / carer may be referred to Herefordshire Council, which we wish to avoid.

The following measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and the decisions regarding legal actions are made by Herefordshire Council in accordance with their code of conduct: Herefordshire Council Penalty notice code of conduct.

- Attendance Plans
- Written Warnings
- Issue of a Notice to Improve
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

13. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

• Illness. However, persistent illness without medical evidence will not be authorised: Parents will be expected to provide supporting evidence, so school are able to consider if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. If the authenticity of an illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's/consultant letter, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in writing. Repeat sickness absence days can be a cause for concern and we would expect contact to be made with a GP regarding medical investigations to rule out any underlying health issues.

• Emergency dental/medical appointment. (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays), appointment cards will be required to support the absence.

• Family holidays in exceptional circumstances and only if authorised in advance by the Head teacher in line with the school attendance policy.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce medical evidence as stated previously.

13. My child has a medical/dental appointment what should I do?

Ideally all appointments should be made outside of school hours. However, we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Where this is not possible, the expectation is for all pupils to attend school before and after any appointments. Appointment cards and/or letters must be provided to the school to ensure the absence can be coded appropriately.

14. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional and classed as truancy.

15. Supporting school attendance

The school recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. We would love to talk to you to discuss avenues of how we can help. We would like to assist you with accessing the appropriate support. Please contact school to make an appointment or arrange a phone call. We request that you work with school and fully engage with any help and support offered.

Please see useful links to support you further

- https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/
- https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/school-attendance-absences
- https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/02/back-to-school-week-everything-you-need-to-know-about-school-attendance/
- Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fb1c28d0e316a40f269a5b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf

16. Can we take family holidays during term-time? What do we need to do?

Family holidays should only be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given during term time. In such circumstance's Parents/carers wishing to apply for a leave of absence will need to complete an Application for Leave of Absence request form 6 weeks in advance and before making any travel arrangements. This can be obtained from the school office or on our Website. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission. Where a holiday in term time is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. Any absences incurred prior to and following the request dates will be coded as unauthorised unless supported by evidence. If an unauthorised holiday is taken during term time, a request will be made to Herefordshire Council who will consider the facts and pursue legal action.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

The decision on whether to refer to Herefordshire Council ultimately rests with the Headteacher. This may take into account:

- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- Irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- Once the school has referred to Herefordshire Council, they consider the facts and decide the appropriate action in accordance with Herefordshire Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

17. What does national threshold mean?

The national threshold has been met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks, with one of, or a combination of the following codes: (a) Code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday), (b) Code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies), and (c) Code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)

18. Penalty Notice Information

Penalty Notice in respect of failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil under section 444A Education Act 1996:

- The National Framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. Parents will not be issued with a third penalty notice.
- If the first penalty notice is paid within 21 days, the penalty is £80. If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is £160.
- If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period parents will not be given the opportunity to pay the lower amount and will be required to pay £160 within 28 days. Herefordshire Council will not accept part payment or payment after 28 days.
- If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first or the penalty notice is not paid in full before the expiry date, Herefordshire Council may prosecute under S444(1) or (1A) of Education Act 1996.
- For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (where guilt was established in a court) but not those proceedings which were withdrawn.
- Once 3 years have elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued, a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

If, in an individual case, Herefordshire Council believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. Circumstances where this may apply include (not exhaustive):

- Several term time holidays below the threshold.
- Repeated absence for birthdays or family events
- When a parent purposefully tries to avoid a penalty notice by taking their child out of school when the school is open for four days for pupils and closed on the fifth day due to a bank holiday or training day.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice. Penalty notices may only be withdrawn for the following reasons: where it is determined that the notice should not have been issued; where the notice should not have been issued to the person named as the recipient; or where it appears to the Council that the notice contains material errors.

19. **Do all parents, partners and carers have a legal responsibility to secure a child's education?**

Yes, all adults, parents and carers have a legal responsibility including absent parents.

DEFINITION OF A PARENT Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to Herefordshire Council which may result in legal proceedings. We wish to avoid this and work in partnership with you.

20. What should I do if I'm considering moving my child to another school?

It is important to communicate with school should you wish to transfer your child to a different school. When pupils leave the school, and no information has been received by the school regarding their new placement and parents/carers are unable to be contacted, the school has a duty of care regarding safeguarding and must contact the Local Authority. The child will be a **Child Missing in Education**. This means that Herefordshire Council has a legal duty to investigate, which will include liaising with Social Services, the Police, and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child. By giving the school details of the child's new school and location, unnecessary investigations can be avoided. Please see link https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/children-missing-education-herefordshire

21. Safeguarding and LA responsibilities

What happens if Children are Missing in Education?

If a pupil's attendance is a continued concern and below 50%, school may refer to Herefordshire Council's Children Missing in Education panel. The panel is chaired by Herefordshire Council. This is to review and assess alternative interventions.

What happens if my child is absent due to medical needs?

Where a child is absent for 15 days or more for the same condition, and who has evidence from an appropriate health care official stating the pupil is unable to access school despite the support that has been put in place, a referral will be made to Herefordshire Council's Inclusion and Engagement Panel. Please see link

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/25881/herefordshire_education_of_children_with_medical_needs_policy
Schools are legally required to notify Herefordshire Council where pupils are coded I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

What should I do if I'm considering Elective Home Education (EHE)?

Elective Home Education (EHE) is a parent's right to choose. This would involve withdrawing their child from school to educate them at home, taking full responsibility for education, including all costs associated with it. There are legal responsibilities that must be fulfilled regarding that education which is monitored by Herefordshire Council. We are unable to encourage or discourage a decision to EHE and as an educational placement, we would hold the view that school is the best place for most children. However, we will ensure we give parents/carers the appropriate information to make an informed decision if it is something they wish to explore, and also an opportunity to discuss the decision with the Headteacher prior to removing a pupil from roll. Please see link
https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11502/elective_home_education_guidance_for_parents_and_carers

18. Can my child work during term time?

Children cannot work under the age of 13 unless they hold a performance licence. During term time children can only work a maximum of 12 hours a week. This includes:

- a maximum of 2 hours on school days and Sundays
- a maximum of 5 hours on Saturdays for 13 to 14-year-olds, or 8 hours for 15 to 16-year-olds

Businesses intending to employ children are required to apply for a child employment permit. The Local Authority may turn down a request for a permit if a child has a poor attendance record at school. Further details can be found at *https://www.gov.uk/child-employment/minimum-ages-children-can-work*.

19. School News and updated information

Please ensure you check our school website for regular news, updated information along with term dates.

Please see the link to our school attendance policy https download.asp