

## School Attendance Policy



# Attendance Policy

Approved by: ..... Date: November 2025  
(Governing Body)

Accepted by: ..... Date  
(Headteacher)

Next Review Date: ..... November 2026

## **Kirkleatham Hall School Attendance Policy**

A supportive, collaborative approach for all our pupils and families.

### **1. Introduction**

At Kirkleatham Hall School, we are committed to supporting every child and young person to access their right to education in a way that is safe, meaningful, and appropriate to their individual needs. We recognise that regular attendance is vital to educational success, wellbeing, and long-term outcomes — but we also acknowledge that for families of children with additional needs, and complicated health needs, attending school can be a significant challenge.

We want parents and carers to know that we are here to work with you, not against you. Our approach to attendance is based on support, compassion, and understanding — not blame or punitive measures.

### **2. Ethos and Commitment**

At Kirkleatham Hall School we believe that without investment in relationships all our efforts will be fruitless. Relationships give us the tools/keys to work with each other and support and develop the whole student. The key to building strong relationships is investment of time and energy!

We understand that:

- Building trust with a school is not always easy, especially for families of children with complex needs or previous negative experiences.
- Attendance concerns often reflect wider challenges — whether health, emotional wellbeing, social circumstances, transport, or other factors — and must be approached holistically.
- Every pupil's needs are different. Our role is to understand those needs and remove the barriers to education, collaboratively, with families.

We are committed to:

- Treating families with respect, empathy, and without judgement.
- Working together to understand and overcome the reasons behind any difficulties with attendance.
- Avoiding legal action unless it is absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the child.

### 3. A Whole-School Approach to Attendance

All staff have a role in promoting and supporting good attendance. We aim to:

- Create a warm, welcoming and safe environment where every pupil feels they belong.
- Build strong relationships with pupils and families, underpinned by honest, respectful communication.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance, without shaming or singling out children with lower attendance.
- Monitor attendance data to identify patterns and offer help early, before problems escalate.

### 4. Supporting Parents and Families

We recognise that parents and carers know their children best. We will:

- Start from a place of curiosity, not judgment.
- Work in partnership with families to understand the full context around absence.
- Respect that every child and family is unique — and so our support must be tailored.
- Provide practical support wherever possible, including flexible transitions, support with transport, signposting to health or family services, or phased returns where appropriate.

When attendance begins to dip, we will:

- A. Contact parents or carers to check in and ask how we can help.
- B. Offer a face-to-face meeting or phone call to explore concerns, review needs and co-create a plan.
- C. Develop a personalised support package where needed, which may include:
  - o Emotional or mental health support
  - o Adjustment to routines or timetables
  - o Multi-agency input
  - o Home-school communication plans

We believe that supportive relationships are the foundation of improved attendance.

## 5. Legal Interventions

As a school, we are required to work within national attendance frameworks. However:

We will only consider legal action in extreme circumstances, and only when:

- All avenues of support have been fully explored and exhausted;
- The level of absence is significantly affecting the child's wellbeing, education or social development;
- There are no medical, emotional or social reasons that explain or justify the non-attendance;
- Continuing absence poses a risk to the child's future or safety.

Where medical needs are a barrier to attendance, we will work with healthcare professionals and families to ensure these are understood, and that any provision is adjusted accordingly — including consideration of part-time attendance, home learning, or medical plans.

Our first and strongest approach is always one of support and collaboration.

## 6. Working with Other Agencies

We work closely with:

- Local Authority School Attendance Support Services
- SEND and Inclusion Services
- Children's Social Care and Early Help Teams
- Medical professionals
- Educational Psychologists and other therapeutic services
- LD CAHMS
- IPBS where required

We involve external agencies only where additional expertise or coordinated support is needed — and we do so with parental consent wherever possible.

## 7. Attendance Monitoring and Data

We keep accurate records of attendance and monitor this regularly to:

- Spot emerging patterns

- Check that support plans are working
- Identify groups or individuals who may need additional help

Registers are taken twice daily and coded in line with DfE guidance. We distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence, and we always seek to understand the reason for any unexplained absence.

## 8. Recording Absence

We ask parents to:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence and keep us updated for longer periods.
- Share any concerns or barriers with us as early as possible, so that we can help.

Where an absence is due to illness, medical appointments, or other unavoidable circumstances, we will record this as authorised. In cases of complex or long-term health needs, we may request additional information so we can make suitable adjustments.

If an absence is not reported, we will always attempt to speak to parents/carers on that day. If we do not hear from parents on the second day of absence, we will do a home visit. In some cases, where there may be greater concern as a result of an absence not being reported, we may visit on the first day of absence.

Even with reported absence, we will always perform a home visit within 10 school days of a child being reported as absent. The only exception to this is when a child is off for health reasons and there is external oversight by other professionals such as carers or medical professionals.

## 9. Leave of Absence in Term Time

We strongly encourage families not to take holidays during term time. However, we will always consider each request for leave on an individual basis and with compassion. We understand that, for some families with children with SEND, travel and family time during quieter, off-peak periods may be important for emotional and sensory wellbeing.

Requests for leave must be made in writing to the Headteacher.

School have agreed, in collaboration with governors, that we will authorise parental requests for up to five days leave of absence within each academic year. This is for the reasons cited above. Any request for leave of absence beyond five days will be deemed as unauthorised except in exceptional circumstances.

## 10. Communication and Review

We will:

- Ensure that all families receive a copy of this policy
- Publish it on our website
- Include information in our induction process for new families
- Review our approach annually with input from parents, staff and governors

## 11. Summary

At Kirkleatham Hall School, we believe in working with, not against, families. We approach attendance through:

- Support
- Understanding
- Partnership

We ask that families communicate openly with us, and in return we commit to listening, acting with compassion, and helping your child to thrive.

If you are struggling with any aspect of school attendance, please don't wait — contact us. We are here to help.

This policy should be read alongside the following D of E publication, Working Together to improve school attendance:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance - August 2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)