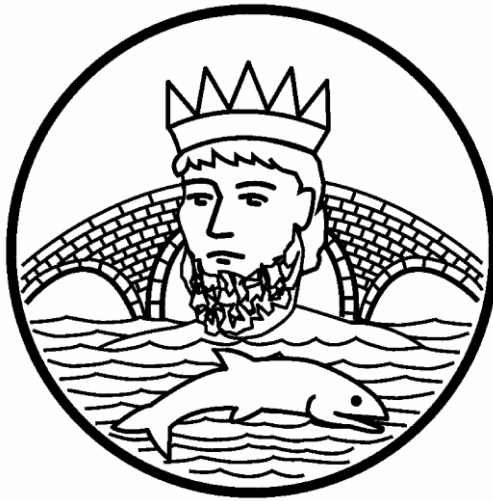


# King Athelstan Primary School



## Attendance Policy

*King Athelstan Primary School - Inspiring Excellence*

We believe in the relentless pursuit of excellence to achieve high standards.

We are driven to inspire our school community to be aspirational, ambitious and to "dream big."

We empower children with choices which prepare them for a life of opportunity.

We teach children that hard work delivers success; we encourage children to take risks and ask brilliant questions in order to inspire a love and passion for learning.

We teach children to think.

We put children's happiness and welfare at the heart of everything we do.

We value friendship, kindness and respect.

We celebrate the excellence in each individual.

We expect families to work with us to form a strong team around every child.

We teach children to be good citizens.

**We are proud of our school: Come as you are and leave us great**

**Responsibility SLT/Welfare & Attendance Officer**

**Date reviewed: July 2024**

**Next review date: June 2025**

# King Athelstan Primary Attendance Policy

## Introduction

The progress of each child is central to King Athelstan's school ethos. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential.

As a school, we expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. A child's attendance should be at least 96%, and anything below 90% is considered 'Persistent Absence'.

Children's attendance is monitored by the school's Welfare and Attendance Officer and the school will work with the Local Authorities Education Welfare Officer to manage Persistent Absences.

The Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion) and Welfare & Attendance Officer, in partnership with parents and carers, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states: -

*'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: -*

- a) To age, ability and aptitude and*
- b) To any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular school or otherwise*

## The School's Approach

The school's aim is always to work alongside families to enable children to attend school well. The open-door policy and open dialogue ethos aim to encourage parents/carers and the school to approach each other in order to remove barriers to attendance. In many cases engaging with the school's additional services (e.g. Nurture or Family Support) or working alongside other multi-agency teams (e.g. Education Welfare) will support the improvement of attendance. Attendance contracts are also used in some cases to agree on the approach between family and school. These are also used when a new child arrives at the school with a history of poor attendance at a previous school or setting.

## Senior Attendance Champion

We have a dedicated Senior Attendance Champion who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. They have a clear vision for improving and maintaining attendance across the school. They work closely with the Welfare & Attendance Officer and staff across the school, to regularly monitor and evaluate attendance progress as well as the school's strategies and processes.

## Welfare & Attendance Officer

Our Welfare & Attendance Officer is responsible for handling day to day attendance processes

including registers and absences. They are there to support families with attendance and to meet parents/carers if there are any attendance concerns.

### **Types of Absence – Authorised & Unauthorised**

There are many reasons that a child may be absent from school, these are considered to be either authorised or unauthorised.

#### *Authorised Absence*

Examples of authorised absence include:-

- Illness – illness is authorised for children whose attendance is 90% or above.
- Illness for a child who is Persistently Absent (attendance Under 90%) – whilst illness is considered an authorised absence, if a child is Persistently Absent with illness, evidence from a medical professional is required in order to authorise the absence. This can be:-
  - A letter/certificate from a GP stating a child is not fit to attend school
  - GP/medical appointment card/email/text confirmation
  - a photograph of prescribed medication, dated and with the child's full name
- Medical or dental appointments– every effort must be made for medical or dental appointments to take place outside of school hours. If a medical appointment falls within the school day it is expected that the child will attend school before and after the appointment. Medical appointments will only be authorised if evidence of the appointment is provided. This can be in the form of an appointment card/letter/text/email provided by the doctor/dentist/hospital/medical professional.
- Exceptional Circumstances – In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, Headteachers may no longer authorise leave of absence for pupils during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' relating to the request, and parents/carers have made an application in advance.
  - Exceptional leave of absence is authorised entirely at the Headteacher's discretion and is not a parental right.
  - Parents/Carers requesting leave of absence from school for their child, should carefully consider the impact of the absence on their child's education. Missing out on lessons will always have a negative impact on a child's educational progress. It is widely understood that children make the best progress through regular and punctual school attendance.
  - Family holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances. This includes days of absence taken at the beginning or end of term for a family holiday.
  - An [Application for Leave in Exceptional Circumstances Form](#) must be completed by the parent/care in advance and returned to the school office.
  - The Headteacher cannot grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding the application **and** an application has been made in advance.

- The Headteacher will consider each application individually including the specific facts, circumstances, and context behind the request.
- If the Headteacher is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances to authorise leave of absence, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a child can be authorised, considering the child's attainment, attendance, and ability to catch up on missed lessons.

### *Unauthorised Absences*

- Family holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances. This includes days of absence taken at the beginning or end of term for a family holiday. See Exceptional Circumstances section above.
- Birthdays/family days out - children are expected to attend school as normal when their birthday falls within term time. Family days out should be taken outside of school sessions.
- Illness where a child is already Persistently Absent (under 90%) and medical evidence has not been provided.
- If the authenticity of a child's illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

### **Absence because of illness - when a child can return to school**

If a child has been [vomiting or had diarrhoea](#) they must stay home from school for 48 hours after their symptoms have gone.

If a child has a [high temperature](#), they must stay home from school until it goes away.

Further information can be found here - [NHS Guidance for different illnesses and when to keep your child home from school](#).

### **Procedures for reporting absence**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the school by 08:50 on the first day of their child's absence. A message should be left on the school absence line (020 8546 8210) or [admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org), the message should include the child's name, class, and reason for absence, including symptoms if a child is unwell.

Messages should be left no later than 8:50 on the day of absence as this is a safeguarding matter and ensures that all parties know that the child is safe and accounted for.

If the school does not receive a message from the parent/carer, the Welfare and Attendance Officer will attempt to contact them by telephone/email/text message. Failure to contact the

parent/carer will trigger any of the following in order to establish the reason for the child's absence: -

- text message or email to primary contacts
- telephone call to other contacts listed;
- contact with other services involved with the family if relevant i.e. Family Support Worker.
- If further services are already working with the family, they may be informed, depending on the agreed procedure for a particular child i.e. Lead Social Worker.

If a child is absent for more than 5 consecutive days and there has been no contact from a parent/carer the absence will be referred to the Single Point of Access within Children's Services at the Local Authority. The school may take this action earlier if they feel the particular circumstances warrant it.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Children's attendance is monitored each week for all pupils on roll at the school, this includes children who attend nursery.

Children's whose attendance falls below 95% will receive an Absence Monitoring letter informing parents/carers of the current level (appendix 1).

Children's whose attendance falls below 90% will receive a Persistent Absence Monitoring letter (appendix 2)

If a child's attendance continues to fall, a further letter will be sent advising parents/carers of a 4-week monitoring period (appendix 3).

If attendance does not improve during the 4-week period a meeting will be scheduled with parents/carers and the Welfare and Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher.

All children whose attendance falls below 90% will be monitored very closely and the school's actions around this will involve the Local Authority via the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Punctuality - lateness**

Children are expected to arrive at school by: -

- Morning Nursery - 08:30 / Afternoon Nursery - 12:30
- Reception - 08:35
- Years 1 to 6 - 8:40.

The children are registered at 08:50 and learning starts immediately.

Pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where parents/carers are expected to sign the lateness register and provide a reason for the lateness. If a child arrives at school after registration closes at 09:30, they will be marked as absent for the entire am session (this will be unauthorised).

If a parent/carers is late collecting their child at the end of the school day, they will need to sign the lateness register.

Persistent lateness - if a child is persistently late they will be missing a significant amount of their education. If a child is late more than 10 times a letter will be sent to parents (appendix 4), with the expectation that punctuality quickly improves. Should punctuality not improve a meeting will be a meeting will be scheduled with parents/carers and the Welfare and Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher.

### **Who to Contact**

You can contact our Welfare & Attendance Officer Natali O'Farrell, and Senior Attendance Champion, Head Teacher Emily Newton. at [admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org) 020 8546 8210 or by visiting the school office.

### **Guidance and Legislation**

[DfE School Attendance: Guidance for Schools](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Education Act 1996](#)

[Education and Education Services Kington and Richmond](#)

### **Related policies**

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Agreed by Governors: 7/7/2022

# Appendix 1 - Below 95%

Dear [PARENT/CARER]

## Re: Your child's attendance

Full attendance at school is essential to the all-round development of your child. As a school, we expect every child's attendance to be at least 96% so they can make the most of their learning and fulfil their potential.

We understand that sometimes a significant illness might cause attendance to drop for a period of time; i.e. COVID-19, chickenpox, or flu. However, attendance should rapidly improve again once a child has recovered.

### Your child's attendance

[CHILD]'s attendance is currently [NUMBER]% and they have missed [DAYS] days of learning since the beginning of the school year. If their attendance falls further, they are at risk of becoming 'Persistently Absent'.

### What does persistently absent mean?

If a child's attendance falls below 90% they are identified as 'Persistently Absent' and are missing at least 10%, Which is a considerable amount of their education.

The table below shows how many days of school a child will miss each half-term if they are persistently absent.

Each school day is made up of two sessions; morning and afternoon (am/pm). This means that a child is absent for two sessions if they miss one day of school.

Absence from school is recorded as either Authorised or Unauthorised. For example: -

- Authorised absences - illness, medical appointments, religious observance
- Unauthorised absence - family holiday, treat for a birthday

Half term	90% or less attendance: Days of school missed	85% or less attendance: Days of school missed
Autumn 1	3+	5+
Autumn 2	6+	8.5+
Spring 1	9+	13.5+
Spring 2	12+	18.5+
Summer 1	15+	23.5+
Summer 2	19+	28+

There are 190 days in the school year, divided across 6 half terms.

- A child with 90% or less attendance is missing at least 19 days of learning, which is almost 4 weeks or more per year.
- A child with 85% or less attendance is missing at least 28 days of learning, which is almost 6 weeks or more per year.

**Working with you to improve your child's attendance**

We look forward to [CHILD]'s attendance improving in the coming weeks and want to work together to support you to improve their attendance.

It is important to understand why their attendance is lower than expected. Together with you, we can look at barriers to good attendance and ways to motivate children to come to school. We can also draw on the expertise of other services to help. Please contact me if you would like to talk this through on 020 8546 8210 or [admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org) between 09:00 – 16:00 during term time.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions big or small. We are here to support you and your child so they can make the best of their educational opportunities.

You can also visit the policy section on our website or ask at the school office to view our Attendance Policy.

Kind regards

Natali O'Farrell

**Welfare & Attendance Officer**

[admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org)

020 8546 8210

## Appendix 2 - Below 90%

Dear PARENT/CARER

### **Re: Your child's attendance**

Full attendance at school is essential to the all-round development of your child. As a school, we expect every child's attendance to be at least 96% so they can make the most of their learning and fulfil their potential.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% they are identified as 'Persistently Absent' and are missing a considerable amount of their education.

We understand that sometimes a significant illness might cause attendance to drop for a period of time; i.e. COVID-19, chickenpox, or flu. However, attendance should rapidly improve again once a child has recovered.

### **Improving your child's attendance**

[CHILD]'s attendance is currently [NUMBER]% and they have missed [DAYS] days of learning since the beginning of the school year.

We want to work together to support you in improving [CHILD]'s attendance in the new term. It is important to understand why their attendance is lower than expected. Together with you, we can look at barriers to good attendance and ways to motivate children to come to school. We can also draw on the expertise of other services to help. Please contact me if you would like to talk this through on 020 8546 8210 or [admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org) between 09:00 - 16:00 during term time.

### **Medical evidence when your child is absent**

While your child's attendance is below 90% we will require medical evidence if they are absent from school. This can be in the form of: -

- A letter/certificate from your GP stating your child is not fit to attend school
- a GP/medical appointment card/email/text confirmation
- a photograph of prescribed medication, dated and with your child's full name

### **If your child continues to be persistently absent**

We look forward to your child's attendance improving in the coming weeks. However, if their attendance remains under 90%, a referral may be made to the local authority's Education Welfare Officer to explore further ways to support their attendance.

### **What does persistently absent mean?**

Persistently absent means a child has missed 10% or more of their education. The table below shows how many days of school a child will miss each half-term if they are persistently absent.

### **How we mark absences**

Each school day is made up of two sessions; morning and afternoon (am/pm). This means that a child is absent for two sessions if they miss one day of school.

Absence from school is recorded as either Authorised or Unauthorised. For example: -

- Authorised absences - illness, medical appointments, religious observance

- Unauthorised absence – family holiday, treat for a birthday

#### How many days of school your child could be missing

Half term	90% or less attendance: Days of school missed	85% or less attendance: Days of school missed
Autumn 1	3+	5+
Autumn 2	6+	8.5+
Spring 1	9+	13.5+
Spring 2	12+	18.5+
Summer 1	15+	23.5+
Summer 2	19+	28+

There are 190 days in the school year, divided across 6 half terms.

- A child with 90% or less attendance is missing at least 19 days of learning, which is almost 4 weeks or more per year.
- A child with 85% or less attendance is missing at least 28 days of learning, which is almost 6 weeks or more per year.

#### Further information

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions big or small. We are here to support you and your child so they can make the best of their educational opportunities.

You can also visit the policy section on our website or ask at the school office to view our Attendance Policy.

Kind regards

Natali O'Farrell

**Welfare & Attendance Officer**

[admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingathelstan.rbksch.org)

020 8546 8210

## Appendix 3 - 4 Week Monitoring

Dear [PARENT/CARER]

### Re: Your child's continued absences

I recently wrote to you to let you know that [CHILD]'s attendance was becoming a concern. Unfortunately, they have continued to have absences from school.

I am writing to advise you that [CHILD]'s current attendance is currently [NUMBER]%.

If their attendance fails to improve over the next 4 weeks, an appointment will be made for us to meet to discuss his absences, and a referral may be made to the local authority's Education Welfare to explore further ways to support you and your family.

### Medical evidence for future absences

While your child's absence is below 90%, we will require medical evidence if they are not in school. This can be in the form of: -

- A letter/certificate from your GP stating your child is not fit to attend school
- a GP/medical appointment card/email/text confirmation
- a photograph of prescribed medication, dated and with your child's full name

You can email the evidence to [admin@kingsathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingsathelstan.rbksch.org) or bring a copy to the school office. Absences without medical evidence will be marked as unauthorised.

### What is persistent absence?

Persistent absence is when a child is persistently absent if they miss more than 10% of their education. The table below shows how many sessions a child will have missed by the end of each half-term to be considered persistently absent.

### How many days of school your child could be missing

There are 190 days in the school year, divided across 6 half terms.

Half term	90% or less attendance: Days of school missed	85% or less attendance: Days of school missed
Autumn 1	3+	5+
Autumn 2	6+	8.5+
Spring 1	9+	13.5+
Spring 2	12+	18.5+
Summer 1	15+	23.5+
Summer 2	19+	28+

- A child with 90% or less attendance is missing at least 19 days of learning, which is almost 4 weeks or more per year.
- A child with 85% or less attendance is missing at least 28 days of learning, which is almost 6 weeks or more per year.

### Working together to improve your child's attendance

We would like to see an immediate improvement in your child's attendance.

Full attendance at school is essential to the all-round development of your child, and we are here to support you so that they can make the most of their educational opportunities. We can help with a wide range of issues and are committed to working with you in the best interests of your child.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns or would like to meet. You can contact me at [admin@kingsathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingsathelstan.rbksch.org) or 020 8546 8210 between 09:00 - 16:00 during term time.

You can also visit the policy section on our website or ask at the school office to view our Attendance Policy.

Many thanks.

Kind Regards

Natali O'Farrell  
**Welfare and Attendance Officer**  
[admin@kingahelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingahelstan.rbksch.org)  
020 8546 8210

## Appendix 4 - Persistent lateness

Dear [PARENT/CARER]

Re: Punctuality at School

I am writing to you because [CHILD] has exceeded 10 late marks this academic year and I am concerned about their ongoing punctuality at school and the significant amount of learning they are missing,

It is essential that children are at school and on time every day to ensure they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to make good progress.

Children are expected to arrive at school by: -

- Morning Nursery - 08:30 / Afternoon Nursery - 12:30
- Reception - 08:35
- Years 1 to 6 - 8:40.

The children are registered when they arrive and learning starts immediately.

[CHILD] has [NUMBER] late marks for this academic year and has missed in excess of [MINUTES] minutes of learning. It is important that immediate steps are taken to ensure that their punctuality is significantly improved.

Full attendance at school is essential to the all-round development of your child, and we are here to support you so that they can make the most of their educational opportunities. Please let us know of any barriers that are causing your child's lateness at school so that we can work together to resolve this. We can help with a wide range of issues and are committed to working with you in the best interests of your child.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns or would like to meet. You can contact me at [admin@kingsathelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingsathelstan.rbksch.org) or 020 8546 8210 between 09:00 - 16:00 during term time.

You can also visit the policy section on our website or ask at the school office to view our Policy.

Many thanks.

Kind Regards

Natali O'Farrell

**Welfare and Attendance Officer**

[admin@kingahelstan.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@kingahelstan.rbksch.org)

020 8546 8210