Attendance and Absence Policy

Kington St. Michael CE Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities for Attendance and Absence

Policy agreed (date):	**29th September 2026**
Policy published (including on website) **(date):**	**29th September 2026**
Next review (date):	**29th September 2027**

Key Attendance and Absence Personnel			
Role	Name	Telephone	Email
Headteacher	Victoria O'Brien	01249 750454	head@ksm.wilts.sch.uk
Designated Teacher for Attendance	Victoria O'Brien	01249 750454	head@ksm.wilts.sch.uk
Designated Governor for Attendance	Andrea Bridle	01249 750454	abridle@ksm.wilts.sch.uk
Designated Teacher for LAC	Victoria O'Brien	01249 750454	head@ksm.wilts.sch.uk

Statement of intent

Kington St Michael C.E. Primary School believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- ✓ Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- ✓ Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- ✓ Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- ✓ Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- ✓ Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- ✓ Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- ✓ Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- ✓ Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- ✓ Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Kington St Michael C.E. Primary School's attendance officer is Mrs. Victoria O'Brien, and can be contacted via admin@ksm.wilts.sch.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE (2026) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE)
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2026) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- Working together to safeguard children 2026

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The Head Teacher is responsible for:
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:
- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:
- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

Definitions
The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:
Arrival at school after the register has closed
Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:
Illness, recorded using code I, where the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness.
Medical or dental appointments, recorded using code M, where the pupil is absent for the appointment.
Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
Other exceptional circumstances where the school has granted leave of absence, recorded using code C.

Unauthorised absence:
Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
Truancy before or during the school day
Absences which have never been properly explained
Arrival at school after the register has closed
Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
Leaving school for no reason during the day

Severe absence (SA):
Missing 50 percent or more of possible sessions across the school year.

Persistent absence (PA):
Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education
Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Irregular attendance:
Attendance that falls below the level expected by the school or shows a pattern of absence or lateness that gives cause for concern. The school will respond using individual circumstances and the national attendance framework.

Attendance Expectations
The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Children below compulsory school age who attend the nursery or Reception provision are expected to attend in accordance with the timetable agreed with their parent/carer. Attendance for non-compulsory school-age pupils will be recorded in accordance with current DfE attendance guidance and school census requirements.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8.40am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons by 8.55am. Pupils will have a 15-minute morning break at 10.45am, and a lunch break at 12:00pm. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:
- The morning register will be marked by 8.55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:10am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Absence Procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:15am on the first day of their child's absence, they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g., one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where absence continues or the reason for absence remains unclear, the school may request further information from parents in order to understand the circumstances and determine the appropriate attendance code.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of Persistent Absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will make attendance returns and notifications to Wiltshire Council in accordance with the statutory requirements and the attendance reporting arrangements agreed with the local authority.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

A pupil's name will only be removed from the admission register where one of the grounds set out in Regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met. Where the relevant ground requires it, the school and Wiltshire Council will make joint reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's location and circumstances before the pupil's name is removed.

Attendance Register

The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers electronically so that they are accurate, can be analysed effectively and can be shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and once during the afternoon session. The register will record the attendance or absence of every registered pupil using the national attendance codes.

The school will use the national attendance codes as set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE attendance guidance. The principal codes are:
/ = Present in the morning
\ = Present in the afternoon
L = Late arrival before the register has closed
C = Leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance
C1 = Leave of absence for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school-age pupil on a temporary part-time timetable
D = Dual registered – attending another educational establishment
E = Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
G = Unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday
I = Illness
J1 = Leave of absence for an employment or educational admission interview
K = Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
M = Medical or dental appointment
N = Reason for absence not yet established
O = Absent in other or unknown circumstances

P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
Q = Unable to attend because of a lack of required access arrangements
R = Religious observance
S = Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T = Leave of absence for a mobile child travelling with a parent for occupational purposes
U = Arrived after the register has closed
V = Educational visit or trip
W = Work experience
X = Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend
Y1 = Unable to attend because normally provided transport is unavailable
Y2 = Unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel
Y3 = Unable to attend because part of the school premises is closed
Y4 = Unable to attend because the whole school site is unexpectedly closed
Y5 = Unable to attend because the pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Z = Prospective pupil not on the admission register
# = Planned whole-school closure

When code N is used, the school will take reasonable steps to establish the reason for absence and will amend the register to the appropriate code within five school days. If the reason cannot be established within five school days, the absence will be recorded using code O.

Where code Y7 is used, the nature of the unavoidable cause will also be recorded.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be recorded as absent in the attendance register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will preserve the original entry, amended entry, reason for amendment, date of amendment and name of the person who made the amendment.

The school will comply with statutory requirements concerning electronic registers, monthly backup copies and retention of register entries.

Authorising Parental Absence Requests
Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Head Teacher, the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Head Teacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Head Teacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave Of Absence
The school will only grant a pupil leave of absence where it considers that the circumstances are exceptional. Parents must apply in advance, where possible, giving the reason for the request and the dates of the proposed absence. The school asks that requests are made at least two weeks in advance where circumstances allow, but urgent or unforeseen exceptional circumstances will be considered individually.

Any request for leave of absence during term time will be considered individually. The school will consider whether the circumstances are exceptional, the likely impact on the pupil's education and any relevant background information, including attendance, safeguarding and family circumstances. Where leave is granted, the school will determine the length of the absence.

The school will not normally authorise term-time holidays. A holiday will not usually constitute an exceptional circumstance.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence

retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness And Healthcare Appointments
Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Illness Absence Around Holiday Periods
Parents and carers should be aware that there is a high level of concern around pupil absence immediately before or after school holiday periods. Where a child is reported absent due to illness on the days directly preceding or following a holiday, the school may request medical evidence before authorising the absence.

Medical evidence may include, but is not limited to:
- A GP or medical professional's note
- Prescription or medication packaging with the child's name and date
- Appointment confirmation (e.g., GP, dentist, hospital)
- Any other appropriate evidence demonstrating that the illness required absence from school

If requested medical evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences can contribute to overall attendance concerns and may result in further action, including formal monitoring or, where appropriate, a Penalty Notice being issued in line with Local Authority policy.

We strongly encourage parents to ensure that holidays are taken during designated school holiday periods only, and that attendance outside of these times remains a priority unless there are genuine and evidenced medical reasons.

Performances and Activities, Including Paid Work
Where a pupil is taking part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad and the absence requires a licence, the school will ensure that the relevant statutory licensing requirements are met before the absence is authorised.

The school will make appropriate arrangements to support the pupil's education during an authorised absence for a regulated performance or regulated employment, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and any arrangements agreed with the local authority.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.

This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence or other statutory authorisation is required, the school will record the absence using the appropriate attendance code once the relevant requirements have been met. The school will not use its 96 percent attendance target as a blanket reason to refuse an otherwise lawful request; decisions will be made in accordance with the statutory framework and the individual circumstances.

Religious Observance
Parents should request absence for religious observance in advance wherever possible.

Absence for religious observance will be recorded using code R where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.

Where appropriate, the school may seek further information to help establish whether the day meets the statutory definition.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence
Code T applies only where the pupil meets the statutory definition of a mobile child and the parent is travelling for occupational purposes. Parents should request the leave in advance where possible. Pupils who do not meet the statutory definition are subject to the same attendance requirements as other pupils.

SEND and Health Related Absences
The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:
- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:
- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Agreeing a temporary part-time timetable in exceptional circumstances, where this is appropriate and in accordance with the statutory requirements for code C2.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.

Any temporary part-time timetable will be exceptional and time-limited. It will be agreed with the parent, recorded in a written plan setting out the timetable, intended outcomes, review arrangements and the steps

towards a return to full-time education. The plan will be reviewed regularly and will not be used as a long-term response to attendance difficulties. The planned support will be tailored to meet their individual needs.

Leave During Lunch Times
Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time, this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises.

The Head Teacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the Head Teacher will ensure a permission letter is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises, the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The Head Teacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time, this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time, the request will be submitted in writing to the Head Teacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis, letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

Truancy
Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.55am and 1:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If further unauthorised absence occurs, the school will consider whether further support or formal attendance intervention is appropriate, in accordance with this policy and Wiltshire Council procedures.

- Where unauthorised absence reaches the national threshold for consideration of a penalty notice, the school will assess the individual circumstances and may refer the case to Wiltshire Council in accordance with the current penalty notice framework. A penalty notice is not automatic.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Absent Pupils
Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.

The following areas will be systematically searched:
- All classrooms
- All toilets
- The library
- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds

Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified. The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.

If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.

The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Head Teacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Head Teacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Attendance Intervention
In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:
- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.

- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
- Sending letters to parents.
- Engaging with LA attendance teams.
- Using penalty notices in accordance with the national framework and Wiltshire Council's current Code of Conduct, where appropriate.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging.

These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g., by setting individualised targets.

Working With Parents to Improve Attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g., social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g., sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g., bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g., the DSL and SENCO, to address this.

Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g., they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g., children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:
- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g., social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention

The school will use a support-first approach to attendance. Where absence is persistent or severe, or where there are emerging patterns of irregular attendance, the school will seek to understand and address barriers before considering formal legal intervention, unless support is not appropriate in the circumstances.

Where support has not worked, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate, the school will work with Wiltshire Council to consider proportionate legal intervention in accordance with the current DfE statutory guidance and Wiltshire Council's attendance and penalty notice arrangements.

A penalty notice may be considered when the national threshold is met: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and may arise from a combination of unauthorised absence codes, including G, N, O and U.

Meeting the national threshold does not automatically result in a penalty notice. The school and local authority will consider the individual circumstances, whether further support is appropriate, whether support has been offered and engaged with, and whether a penalty notice or another legal intervention is the most appropriate response.

Where appropriate, a Notice to Improve may be used as a final opportunity for a parent to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered. A Notice to Improve will not normally be given where support is not appropriate or where the circumstances make a penalty notice the more appropriate response.

The school will not issue penalty notices itself unless authorised to do so. Where a penalty notice is considered appropriate, the school will make a referral/request to Wiltshire Council in accordance with the council's current Code of Conduct and evidence requirements.

The national framework limits the use of penalty notices to two notices issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period. Where further unauthorised absence reaches the threshold after this, the local authority will consider alternative legal intervention in accordance with the statutory framework.

Where attendance does not improve despite appropriate support and intervention, the school will work with Wiltshire Council to consider other legal interventions, including prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or an Education Supervision Order where appropriate.

Monitoring And Analysing Absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g., pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g., pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends.

This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Training Of Staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g., the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Kington St. Michael C.E. Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard and that effective, proportionate intervention is provided where concerns arise:

1. Attendance data is reviewed weekly by the attendance officer and SLT, including attendance to date, persistent absence, severe absence, punctuality and patterns of absence.

2. Classroom teachers discuss attendance and punctuality trends with the attendance officer or SLT and raise any emerging concerns promptly.

3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of any unexplained absence. Code N is used where the reason has not yet been established. The reason will be established and the register amended within five school days, or code O will be used where the reason remains unknown.

4. Attendance is monitored proactively for pupils whose attendance is declining, whose absence is becoming irregular, or who may be at risk of persistent or severe absence. The school will consider individual circumstances rather than relying solely on percentage thresholds.

5. Where concerns emerge, the school will contact parents to discuss the pattern of attendance, understand barriers and agree appropriate support. This may include an attendance plan, pastoral support, SEND support, reasonable adjustments, early help or referral to relevant external agencies.

6. Where attendance remains a concern despite support, the school will escalate its response in line with this policy and current Wiltshire Council attendance procedures. This may include an attendance meeting, involvement of the local authority attendance service and consideration of legal intervention.

7. The school will monitor the impact of agreed actions and review them regularly. Where attendance improves, support will continue as necessary until attendance is stable.

8. Where the national penalty notice threshold is met, the school will consider whether a referral to Wiltshire Council for a penalty notice is appropriate, taking account of the national framework, the individual circumstances and whether support has been effective or engaged with.

9. The governing board will receive regular attendance information and will use this to provide strategic support and challenge, including consideration of whole-school trends, vulnerable groups, persistent and severe absence and the effectiveness of interventions.

Monitoring And Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy is shared by schools in the Chippenham Village Cluster and will be reviewed annually. The next scheduled review date is September 2027. The policy will also be updated sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or Wiltshire Council attendance arrangements.