



## Parent Guide

# *Pupil Attendance*

*Updated October 2018*

This guide explains your responsibilities as a parent/carer when it comes to your child's attendance at school. The guide also contains information about what school staff at Kirkton will do in order to support your child and encourage their attendance at school.

If your child is going to be absent from school please contact us before 9.30am. **Phone 01555 772466 (option 1).**

The phones can be busy in the morning leaving a message is often much easier for parents/carers.

You will not get a reply to your message but if for any reason we have not received it, we will contact you later in the morning.



## Introduction

“Attending and taking part in learning – wherever learning takes place – is fundamental to making sure that our young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.”

***A guide for parents about school attendance, The Scottish Government, Edinburgh 2010***

At Kirkton Primary School, we recognise the importance of regular attendance at school and how this influences a child’s ability to reach their full potential. Any absence or late coming can affect a child’s learning and can disrupt the teaching routines within the classroom.

“Parents are by far the most important influence in children’s lives and learning.”

***A guide for parents about school attendance, The Scottish Government, Edinburgh 2010.***

**Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.**

## Actively Promoting Regular Attendance

Parents/Carers, pupils and school staff all have a role to play in creating an expectation of regular attendance at school.

The school will:

- Inform parents/carers of their child’s annual attendance each year.
- Contact parent/carers throughout the year if their child’s attendance falls below the school’s attendance target.
- Reward pupils for high attendance through stickers and/or certificates on a monthly basis and certificates at the end of the session.

## Pupil Absence

At the start of each session, parents/carers are asked to provide the school with contact details, including at least one emergency contact number and one mobile number. Parents/Carers are required to ensure that this information is kept up to date throughout the year. **Parents/Carers are asked to contact the school if their child is not able to attend from the start of the school day on the morning of the first absence, by 9.30am.**

If a child has not arrived in school and no contact has been made by the parent/carer the following actions will be taken by the school:

- A text message will be sent asking the parent/carer to contact the school.
- If no contact is made school, staff will contact all emergency contacts.
- If all attempts to locate the child have been exhausted, and there are concerns over the child’s safety, the police will be contacted. This step is taken to ensure that the child is not missing.



## Family Holidays during Term Time

Every effort should be made to avoid family holidays during term time as this both disrupts the child's education and reduces learning time.

Absences will be classified as authorised only in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances may include:

- A family holiday judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events
- A religious festival

Only written requests will be considered. Appropriate requests will be granted on not more than three occasions in any one school session and the pupil noted as an authorised absentee in the register. Parents/Carers should inform the school by letter of the dates before going on holiday.

A family holiday classified under the 'authorised absence' category will not include such reasons as:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced during school holidays
- Holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term
- Parental difficulty obtaining leave (except in cases where evidence is provided by the employer that it cannot accommodate leave during school holidays without serious consequences)

Please note that work will not be provided in advance of a parental holiday, however we would ask for parental support to complete significant aspects of teaching upon your return.

## Medical Appointments

Medical appointments, which last only part of an opening, e.g. just part of the morning or part of the afternoon are not regarded as an absence. However, an appointment, which lasts for a whole morning or afternoon, would be recorded as one absence.

## Late Coming

It is important that children arrive at school on time. Children arriving late often miss important information given by teachers at the start of the day and may miss the introduction to their first lesson. This could influence their learning and their progress.

Children who arrive at school after the 9am bell has rung and after the school gates have been closed should enter the building through the main door. The child's details will be entered into the school "Late Book" and the late coming will be recorded in the child's attendance record.



# Procedures for Managing Attendance

The following processes have been put in place for pupils who attend Kirkton Primary School and are in-line with South Lanarkshire policy:

1. At the start of each session, parents will be provided with this *Pupil Attendance Parent Guide*.
2. If a child is absent from school and the parent/carer does not contact the school by 9.30am a reminder text will be sent. Parents are asked to contact the school immediately. If no contact is made the school may attempt to contact all other emergency contacts. If contact is not possible the police may be asked to visit the child's home.
3. The school regards attendance of under 85% to be causing concern and will monitor such pupils closely. In a four week month a 15% absence would equal three days.
4. At the end of each month the attendance of every child in the school is reviewed by the leadership team. The parents/carers of pupils whose attendance falls below 85%, for that month, will be sent a letter informing them of the school's concerns.
5. If a child's attendance falls below 85% for more than one month his/her parents/carers will be invited to discuss their child's attendance with a member of the leadership team.
6. If there is still no improvement in the child's attendance the pupil may be referred to the Attendance Council. Parents/Carers will be informed of this through a letter.

*The use of this process is at the discretion of the head teacher and therefore certain stages can be omitted if it is felt that a more immediate response is necessary.*

## Notes

We understand that children do get ill and sometimes require to be absent from school. We would not want any child to be brought back to school before they are well. **Any child suffering from vomiting and/or diarrhoea should be kept away from school for 48 hours after their symptoms have gone.** For more guidance on how to know if, you should keep your child away from school visit: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Yourchildatschool/Pages/Illness.aspx>

We will review absences on a monthly basis. Therefore, a child who usually has good attendance may drop below 85% in a month where they had chicken pox. This may result in a letter being sent to parents. It would be expected that the next month the child's attendance would be back to normal and so no further action would be required. The first letter simply brings the child's attendance to the attention of his/her parents.

***As a school we want to support pupils and parents/carers. If you have any concerns about your child's attendance please contact the school.***

