KEYS Academy Trust
Unlocking the future

Attendance Policy:

Summary for parents

This summary is designed to be a document to provide the key information and headlines from our attendance policy. This summary is not a substitute for reading the attendance policy in full. Any specific numbered sections are direct references to the main policy.

TKAT vision
We are a family of distinctive schools at the heart of the diverse communities we serve. In line with our Christian ethos, we aspire to excellent learning and pastoral care for pupils and staff and are committed to being open and welcoming to all.

Key areas of note
Please note the following, which will be applicable throughout the policy:

- Any reference to 'headteacher' should read as whatever title is relevant to the school using the policy (i.e. Executive Headteacher/Head of School or Headteacher). Anything else will be explicitly referenced within the policy.
- Any reference to 'everyone' to staff, trustees, local governors and pupils.
- Any reference to 'we' should be read as The Keys Academy Trust.
- Any reference to 'parents' should be read as 'parents, carers and guardians'.

Introduction: our commitment to attendance

The staff of our school are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, pupils, governors, trustees of The Keys Academy Trust (TKAT) and the Local Authority, to provide an education of the highest standard for all our children.

Actions taken following specific absence thresholds being met

12.1 Where a pupil has missed 10 school days with complete or partial authorised absence, the school will apply safeguarding strategies and make a Child Absent from Education (CAE) referral to notify the Local Authority.

12.2 Where a pupil has had 10 days of consecutive unauthorised absence, the school will apply safeguarding strategies and make a Child Missing Education (CME) referral.

12.3 Where a pupil has missed 20 consecutive school days or more, the school update and resubmit the Child Missing Education (CME) referral to notify the LA and the LA will register the pupil as Child Missing Education (CME).

Responsibilities of parents, carers and pupils

3.2.6 Parents are responsible, in law, for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents are also responsible for the following:

a) Ensure that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
b) Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
c) Impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
d) Inform the school on the first day of absence, by 09:30 at the latest.

e) Provide the school with an explanation for the absence on the day of absence.
f) Inform the school of any changes to their contact details.
g) Provide full emergency contact details and expect them to be used if no contact can be made during absences.
h) Take an active and proactive interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings.
i) Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
j) Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
k) Ensure they do not book holidays during term-time.
l) Treat staff with respect.
m) Actively support the work of the school.
n) Request support from staff for help when they need it.
o) Communicate, as early as possible, circumstances which may affect absence or require support.
p) Proactively engage with support offered.

3.2.7 Pupils are responsible for the following:

a) Attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year unless there are good reasons for their absence.
b) Arrive at school on time.
c) Be appropriately prepared for the day.
d) Bring to the attention of their class teacher or an appropriate member of staff any issues that may affect their school attendance.

Pupils leaving during the school day

6.1 Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

6.2 Parents should arrange medical, dental and other appointments outside of school time unless it is an emergency. Parents are requested to confirm, in writing, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.

6.3 Pupils must be signed out at the school office upon a child leaving the school, and the child must be signed back in on their return.

Key information on authorised and unauthorised absence

11.1 It should be noted that, as a general rule, parents should aim for 100% attendance for their child. Although there are some circumstances in which authorised absence will be granted, a majority will be unauthorised. Parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence.

11.2 **Authorised absence**

11.2.1 You must get permission if you want to take your child out of school during term time. You can only do this if the following are met:

a) You make an application to the Headteacher, in writing, in advance.
b) There are exceptional circumstances (see the section on 'exceptional circumstances'). It should be noted that parents cannot expect, as a right, that the school will authorise leave of absence.

11.2.2 All requests for leave of absence should be completed on a Leave of Absence Form, which can be located on the school website or from the school office.

11.2.5 Reasons for absence typically being authorised (not an exhaustive list):

a) Illness: The pupil is unwell and has not been asked to provide proof of absence. Please refer to the medical need and illness policy for details on expectations for time away from school for illnesses. In the

instances where a child is unwell, a leave of absence form is not required, and the parent should contact the school via the on-the-day absence procedures (usually an email or phone call) before 08:30.
b) Bereavement: There is a close family bereavement. Time may be given for a funeral (1 day) or, in exceptional circumstances, compassionate absence for a child under wellbeing and mental health. See the section on exceptional circumstances.
c) Religious Observance: a maximum of 1 day's absence is allowed for recognised religious observance and only where the observance is recognised by the religious body to which the parent is associated.
d) Wedding: 1 day's absence will be granted for a close family wedding.
e) Medical, dental or hospital appointments: Whilst these are typically authorised, please ensure these appointments take place out of school time where at all possible in order not to disrupt your child's education.

11.2.6 Evidence may be requested for any of the above, including letters from legal bodies, flight details or requests for parents to authorise the school to speak to their child's GP.

11.2.8 Please note that some authorised absences (i.e. medical) will still affect your child's overall attendance, as attendance figures are taken from the number of days your child is in school (regardless of what the reason for absence was). However, the school then analyses and takes a proportionate approach to addressing attendance based on the reasons for absence (i.e. illness or medical need, or an avoidable absence such as an unauthorised holiday during term time).

11.3 **Unauthorised absence**

11.3.1 Absence will not be routinely authorised if prior notice has not been given, and/or a Leave of Absence Form has not been completed. Term time holidays will not be authorised as a general rule.

11.3.3 Taking unauthorised absence may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or legal action (see the section on fixed penalty notices).

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

14.1 The school refers cases that meet the local authority PN code of conduct in relation to unauthorised absence.

14.2 Absence is calculated in sessions (1 half day = 1 session, so a day of absence from school is 2 sessions).

14.3 Please be aware that unauthorised absence of 5 days or 10 sessions in 10-week rolling period may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice which carries a fine of £80 or if not paid after 21 days, then the fine is doubled to £160 and court prosecution if unpaid after 28 days.

14.4 Penalty Notices are served per parent, per child. The 'per parent' expectation also applies to separated families where both parents have a legal responsibility to care for the child/ren.

Changing schools

8.1 It is important that, if parents decide to send their child to a different school, they inform the school office, in writing, of the name of the new school as soon as possible.