



Policy on Attendance Whole School

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Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

At Kent College we believe education to be a partnership between the family and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for our girls, and we look to parents to support this objective.

Regular school attendance correlates directly with success in academic work and provides opportunities for important communication between teachers and girls. National research shows that when students of equal 'ability' are compared, those with attendance of over 95% perform one grade higher per subject than those with attendance of 85% or less. Each further 10% fall reduces this by another grade.

Regular attendance also has a cumulative effect of establishing life-long positive traits – responsibility, determination, respect for rules of society - that are critical for developing career-readiness skills, success at university and in life.

We expect all girls on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, provided they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The school recognises that reducing absence will:

- promote our girls' welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every girl has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- improve each girl's opportunity to succeed whilst at school and after she leaves school.

1. Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their daughter(s) attend school regularly and arrive on time.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their daughter is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that their daughter is safe.

The school can be contacted at attendance@kentcollege.kent.sch.uk or by phoning 01892 822006.

2. Definitions

Authorised absence:

When a girl is away from school, the school has received notification from a parent or guardian, and the school has granted permission for the absence.

Unauthorised absence:

When a girl is away from school without the permission of the school.

The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised solely rests with the school. Therefore, an absence may be deemed unauthorised even if it has the support of a parent.

3. Registration and late Arrivals

At Kent College the register is taken at 8.30 am and 1.55pm in the Senior School and at 8:30am and 1:05pm in the Prep School. Girls arriving after these times report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The Senior School register will close at 9:00 am and 2.00 pm. The Prep School register will close at 9:00 am and at 1:10pm. Girls arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

4. Sixth Form registration

Sixth form are expected to register at 8:30 in their form room. If a girl is late she is expected to sign in at reception in the Sixth Form Late Folder, giving the date, her name and the reason for lateness. This book will be regularly checked by the Assistant Head (Sixth Form).

Afternoon registrations are completed by the girls independently via biometric thumb scan. Machines for this are available in Tilley Sixth Form Centre and in Reception. It is each girl's responsibility to remember to do this. Regular failure to do so will result in a meeting with parents being arranged with the Assistant Head. As a further consequence privileges (see below) may be removed and the girl may be disqualified from prefect status.

5. Senior School Early Arrivals

If a girl arrives on site before 8.10am she must go to the Dining Hall to sign in, and remain there until 8.10 am, after which she is free to go to her form room.

6. The Role of the School Staff in recording and monitoring attendance

6.1 Form tutors will

- complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Teachers mark girls present, absent or late.
- notify the Senior Attendance Officer and the relevant Assistant Head of girls whose attendance is causing concern.

6.2 The School office will

- endeavour to contact a parent or guardian at the earliest opportunity if an absence is unexpected. When communication from a parent is via email, the school office will send an acknowledgement to the same email address as verification.
- collate a full list of absent girls to email to all staff after morning and afternoon registration.

6.3 The Senior Attendance Officer (SAO) has overall responsibility for attendance.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Attendance Officer to ensure that:

- attendance and lateness records are up to date;
- parents are contacted on the day of absence if no reason has been provided;
- unauthorised absence is followed up, with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised (Code N will be changed to O);
- the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes);
- parents informed every half term of their daughter's attendance figure;
- the Senior Attendance Officer will examine attendance figures at the end of a grade/reporting cycle and will identify all girls whose attendance/ punctuality has dropped below 95%. The Senior Attendance Officer will print off individual attendance/punctuality reports for these girls and pass these to the relevant Assistant Head.

6.4 Heads of School (Lower, Middle, Sixth Form) will

- have an overview of all issues relating to poor punctuality and attendance. If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held with the relevant Head of School.

7. Record keeping

The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. To comply with ISI regulations, a monthly back-up of the computerised registration system is recorded and kept in a separate location.

8. Timeline of school action

8.1 Poor punctuality

- If a girl is unauthorised late for 4 registrations, the girl will meet with the relevant Assistant Head.
- If a girl fails to improve, sanctions may be enforced, and a letter will be sent home.
- If improvement is still not shown, parents will be required to meet with the Headmistress (see penalty proceedings).

8.2 Authorised absence

- The Senior Attendance Officer will identify all girls whose attendance has dropped below 95% after the first half term. The Senior Attendance Officer will print off individual attendance/punctuality reports for these girls and pass these to the relevant Assistant Head. A letter will be sent home at this stage.
- When a girl's attendance drops below 90%, the Assistant Head will investigate in more detail. Parents will be invited in to school to discuss the impact of the absences and solutions sought. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be made aware.
- If attendance is below 90% for 2 half terms in any academic year, the Headmistress will meet with the parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be involved and a referral to the Kent County Council Education Welfare Officer may be made.

8.3 Unauthorised absence

- **A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.**
- In the first instance, the school office will contact the parent or guardian of any girl who has an unauthorised absence. Where there has been no communication, an email will be sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised.
- The Senior Attendance Officer will identify all girls who have more than 3 unauthorised absences in a half term and inform the relevant Assistant Head. The Assistant Head will investigate in more detail and parents may be invited in to school to discuss the problem. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware and the situation closely monitored.
- If there is no improvement in the following half term, the Headmistress will meet with the parents. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be involved and a referral to the Kent County Council Education Welfare Officer may be made.
- Any girl who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more is deemed to be a safeguarding risk. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be actively involved and a referral to the Kent County Council Education Welfare Officer may be made.

9. If a girl is absent from a lesson

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a girl, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school office will follow the appropriate procedure to locate her (see 'When a girl goes missing - Whole School').

10. Penalty Proceedings

Aside from an impact on attainment, poor attendance will have other long term repercussions.

- Attendance percentages will be recorded on school reports. Increasingly we are finding that reports are requested as part of references. Thus, girls with poor attendance could jeopardise long term prospects.
- In terms of writing references Kent College cannot in good faith make a positive comment about a girl's reliability should she have poor attendance and punctuality.
- When a girl has a record of poor punctuality or attendance without good reason, the school will preclude her from possessing positions of responsibility in the Sixth Form.
- In significant cases the school reserves the right to review a girl's place at Kent College, particularly during the transition from Year 11 to the Lower Sixth.
- If authorised attendance is below 90% for 2 half-terms in any academic year, a referral to the Kent County Council Education Welfare Officer may be made.

11. Requests for leave of absence

A parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message does not in itself authorise an absence.

Absences will only be authorised if an explanation is received and agreed by the school.

Term dates are published in advance in order that parents can arrange holidays and family activities without disrupting their daughter's holistic education. We expect parents to respect these dates to ensure their daughter's full participation in the life of the school.

Parents are requested to note that girls are required to attend a number of events that occur after the normal school day or on Saturdays. These compulsory events include:

Autumn term

- The Carol Concert
- The Birthday Lecture
- Open Day

Summer term

- Sports Day
- Speech Day

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not normally be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Family Holidays
- Travelling during term time

Boarders are particularly required to note that leaving early at the end of a school term in order to utilise cheaper/more convenient flights is not acceptable. Such absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

11.1 Authorisation of absence: up to one day

Absence can be authorised by the relevant Head of School/ Deputy Head for:

- interviews
- careers courses etc. connected with a girl's future,
- participation in representative games and activities.
- unavoidable doctors' and dentists' appointments. Whenever possible these should be arranged after the school day, at weekends or during the school holidays.

Sixth Formers are allowed to attend two university visits in the Summer term of the Lower Sixth. Girls should fill out the required permission form, which should be signed by parents, the girl's Form Tutor and the Head of Sixth Form.

11.2 Authorisation of absence: absence of more than one day

Only the Headmistress or Head of Prep School can authorise absence of more than one consecutive day.

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional family circumstances should be made in writing to the Headmistress, or Head of Prep School.

Where there is doubt, the Headmistress, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. **The absence must be absolutely unavoidable.**

If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

12. Medical long-term absence

When a girl has an illness or injury that means she will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that she can keep up with her school work. After 5 consecutive days' absence, a doctor's note must be provided.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repeated absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for her to be given some tuition outside school.

13. Study leave

Girls will be granted study leave during internal and public exams. During this time, girls will be expected to sign in and out at reception.

Girls are only allowed to take study leave that has been agreed with the school.

14. Boarders (FULL, WEEKLY & FLEXI)

Term dates are published over a year in advance in order that flights can be booked without disrupting a girl's education. We therefore expect all girls to arrive punctually on the first day of term, and not to leave school before the last day of term.

All girls who board are cared for by Housestaff, who are responsible for the girls during term-time, including ensuring that they are safely occupied outside normal school hours.

The school expects girls to 'sign out' when they leave the school and 'sign in' on return. This is to ensure that the school always knows the whereabouts of the girls during term time when they are under the school's care.

The school expects the girls to live with their parents or their guardian when they are away from school during exeats and half terms. Permission must be sought from the girl's Housemistress if a girl is invited to stay with another family. The House staff will liaise with both families.

If a girl is taken ill during an exeat and will not be returning on time parents or guardians must inform the school. (The school will always telephone the home if the girl is more than three hours late in returning from an exeat.)

The school expects Year 11 and Upper Sixth boarders to make arrangements with guardians if they wish to have time away from school on completion of their public examinations. Girls must remain in the country in order to attend Speech Day.

15. Sixth form attendance privileges

Sixth form girls are expected to attend the full school day. However, as befits their increasing responsibility and independence, they may be granted a number of unique privileges. These privileges are given at the discretion of the school and will be removed should there be any academic or pastoral concerns.

These privileges are:

- Any Sixth Former may arrange to leave school for a driving lesson during periods 10 and 11 (but never before) if she has no lessons. Written permission for this must be given by home and agreed by the Assistant Head (Sixth form).
- Upper Sixth Formers may go out to lunch during the lunch break if written permission has been received from parents.
- Upper Sixth Formers may study at home for one afternoon per week if they have no lessons. Written permission must be provided by home and agreed by the Assistant Head (Sixth form).
Any girl leaving site **must** sign out at the front desk in the Sixth Form Late Folder.
On their return girls must also sign in. Failure to do this will result in privileges being removed.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Headmistress: June 2009

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