



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 pupils, 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 pupils. 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 pupils 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 pupils' welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- improve each pupil's opportunity to succeed whilst at school and after they leave school.

1. Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time.

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

The Senior School can be contacted at attendance@kentcollege.kent.sch.uk or by phoning 01892 822006. The Prep School can be contacted on 01892 820204.

2. Definitions

Authorised absence:

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

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

3. Registration and late Arrivals

Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Morning registration is taken by form tutors at 8.30am in the Senior School. Afternoon registration takes place in lessons on iSAMS. Registration in the Prep School is at 8:30am and 1:05pm with the pupil's class teacher. Pupils 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 is taken by class teachers and will close at 9:00 am and at 1:10pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

4. Senior School Early Arrivals

If a pupil arrives on site before 8.10am they must go to the Dining Hall to sign in, and remain there until 8.10am, after which they are free to go to their form room.

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

5.1 Form tutors/Student managers /Class teachers (Prep) will

- complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session in the Prep School. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late
- notify the Senior Attendance Officer and the relevant Head of School/Key Stage of pupils whose attendance is causing concern
- contact parent and/or pupil if a pupil is absent for more than three days.
- contact Student Managers, Head of Sixth and DSL and report concerns about attendance.

5.2 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 pupils to email to all staff after morning and afternoon registration

5.3 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 child's attendance figure;
- the Senior Attendance Officer will examine attendance figures at the end of the first half term and monthly thereafter and will identify all pupils whose attendance/ punctuality has dropped below 95%. The Senior Attendance Officer will print off individual attendance/punctuality reports for these pupils and pass these to the relevant Head of School/Key Stage;
- report concerns to Student Managers and the DSL.

5.4 Student Managers and Head of Sixth 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;
- discuss attendance and punctuality concerns at Welfare Meetings.

6. 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.

7. Timeline of school action

7.1 Poor punctuality

- If a pupil is unauthorised late regularly, the pupil will meet with the relevant Student Manager or Head of Sixth.
- If a pupil 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 Deputy Head (Pastoral) (see penalty proceedings).

7.2 Authorised absence

- The Senior Attendance Officer will identify all pupils whose attendance has dropped below 95% after the first half term, and monthly thereafter The Senior Attendance Officer will print off individual attendance/punctuality reports for these pupils and pass these to the relevant Student Manager/Head of Sixth who may contact the pupil's parent or guardian if the reasons have not already been discussed. The conversation is a proactive measure emphasising the importance of excellent attendance and exploring reasons for absence if unknown or unclear.
- When a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the Student Manager/Head of Sixth 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.

Should poor attendance continue, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and DSL will contact parents and this may involve a referral to the Kent County Council Education Welfare Officer.

7.3 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 pupil 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 pupils who have more than 3 unauthorised absences in a half term and inform the relevant Student Manager/Head of Sixth. The Student Manager/Head of Sixth 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.

Should poor attendance continue, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and DSL will contact parents and this may involve a referral to the Kent County Council Education Welfare Officer.

- Any pupil 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 and the CME (Children Missing Education) team may be made.

8. If a pupil is absent from a lesson

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

9. 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, pupils 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 pupil's reliability should they have poor attendance and punctuality.
- When a pupil has a record of poor punctuality or attendance without good reason, the school may preclude them from possessing positions of responsibility in the Sixth Form.
- In significant cases the school reserves the right to review a pupil'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.

10. 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 child's holistic education. We expect parents to respect these dates to ensure their child's full participation in the life of the school.

Parents are requested to note that pupils 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 Service
- 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.

10.1 Authorisation of absence: up to one day

Absence can be authorised by the relevant Student Manager/Head of Sixth for:

- interviews
- careers courses etc. connected with a pupil'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. Students should fill out the required permission form, which should be signed by parents, the student's Form Tutor and the Head of Sixth Form.

10.2 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.

11. Medical long-term absence

When a pupil has an illness or injury that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that the pupil can keep up with their school work. After 5 consecutive days' absence, a doctor's note must be provided. Student Managers/Head of Sixth or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will be in regular contact with parents to ensure continuity of provision.

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 them to be given some tuition outside school.

12. Study leave

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

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

13. Boarders (FULL, WEEKLY & FLEXI)

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

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

The school expects pupils 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 pupils during term time when they are under the school's care.

The school expects the pupils 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 pupil's Housemistress if they are invited to stay with another family. The House staff will liaise with both families.

If a pupil 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 pupil 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. Pupils must remain in the country in order to attend Speech Day.

14. Sixth Form attendance privileges

Sixth form pupils 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 9 and 10 (but never before) if they have no lessons. Written permission for this must be given by home and agreed by the Head of 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 Head of Sixth Form. Any pupil leaving site **must** sign out at the front desk in the Sixth Form Late Folder. On their return pupils 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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