



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## WHOLE SCHOOL

This Policy applies to the Whole School, including EYFS and Boarding

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### Key Contacts

Senior Attendance Champion – Louise Payne (Deputy Head Pastoral)

### Aims and Scope

This policy applies to the whole School [including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)].

This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

Kent College aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

1. to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
2. to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
3. to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
4. to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
5. to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection

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.

## Policy Context

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

1. [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, August 2024);
2. [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) (DfE, August 2024);
3. [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#) (DfE, August 2024);
4. [Guidance for Parents on school attendance](#) (Office of the Children's Commissioner, July 2024);

5. ['Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) (NHS, April 2024);
6. [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, September 2024);
7. [Children missing education](#) (DfE, August 2024);
8. [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) (DfE, August 2017);
9. [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (DfE, February 2024);
10. [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) (DfE, November 2018);
11. [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) (DfE, February 2023);
12. [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (DfE, February 2023);
13. [Providing Remote education: guidance](#) for schools (DfE, updated August 2024); and
14. [[SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)].

The following School policies are relevant to this policy:

1. [[Child protection policy including safeguarding](#)];
3. [[Missing child policy](#)]
4. [[Special educational needs and learning difficulties policy](#)];
5. [[Disability policy](#)];
6. [[Rewards and Consequences policy](#)]

#### 4. 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](mailto:attendance@kentcollege.kent.sch.uk) or by phoning 01892 822006. The Prep School can be contacted on 01892 820204.

#### 5. 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.

#### 6. 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 1.15pm 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 2.15 pm. The Prep School register is taken by class teachers and will close at 9:00 am and at 1.20pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

## 7. Early Arrivals

If a Senior School pupil arrives on site before 8.10am they must go to the Library and early arrival Prep pupils must go to the Prep Hall to sign in, and remain there until 8.10am, after which they are free to go to their form room.

## 8 The Role of the School Staff in recording and monitoring attendance

### 8.1 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 Head of Prep 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.

### 8.2 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

8.3 The Governing Body have appointed a Senior Attendance Champion (SAC) to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. The SAC's responsibilities are:

- a. to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;
- b. to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- c. to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- d. to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- e. to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

The Senior Attendance Officer will work with the SAC 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 of Senior School pupils are 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 Student Manager or Head of Prep;
- report concerns to Student Managers and the DSL.

#### **8.4 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.

#### **8.5 All Staff**

- The School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it.
- The School will provide appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.
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### **9 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.

### **10 Timeline of school action**

#### **10.1 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, consequences 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).

Parents of Prep pupils who are regularly late will be contacted by the class teacher or by the Head of Prep if improvement is not shown.

#### **10.2 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/Head of Prep who may contact the pupil's parent or guardian if the reasons have not already been discussed. A letter will be sent to the parent or guardian of the student to notify them that their attendance has dropped. Any subsequent conversation had 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 or Head of Prep 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 Pru Inclusion and Attendance Service The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) Digital Front Door - KELS.I.

### 10.3 Unauthorised absence

- **A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation. .**
- 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 Pru Inclusion and Attendance Service .

- 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 Pru Inclusion and Attendance Service and the CME (Children Missing Education) team may be made.

## 11 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').

## 12. Pupils with additional needs

The School recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The School will make reasonable adjustments<sup>7</sup> where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.

It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupils education, health and care plan is accessed.

Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan the School will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance<sup>9</sup>.

Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with Parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

### 13. Penalty Proceedings

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

- Attendance percentages will be recorded on Senior 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 Pru Inclusion and Attendance Service may be made.

### 14. 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

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- 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.**

#### **14.1 Authorisation of absence: up to one day**

Absence can be authorised by the relevant Student Manager/Head of Sixth/Head of Prep 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.

#### **14.2 Authorisation of absence: absence of more than one day**

Only the Head 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 Head, or Head of Prep School.

Where there is doubt, the Head, 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.

### **15. Medical absence**

#### 15.1 Short term absence



The School does not expect unwell pupils to be working during short-term medical absence (5 days or less). We would expect that they focus instead on their recovery. As a result, the school will not send work home during the absence or provide online tuition. Instead, on the pupil's return to school they should contact their teachers to request catch-up work to complete. They can also seek advice from their tutor/class teacher in managing this accumulated workload.

### 15.2 Long- term absence

In the case of long-term medical absence (over 5 days) the school also expects pupils to focus on their recovery. However, it also recognises that long term absence may impact on pupil progress if not mitigated in some way. As a result, when a pupil has an illness or injury that means they will be away from school for over five days and they are capable of working, the school will do all it can to provide home study materials or arrange access to online lessons when viable. It is important that parents contact the School to discuss how best to implement and manage this 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.

### 16 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.

### 17 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 House staff, 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.

### 18 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

Reviewed by SLT: February 2012

Approved by Education Committee: March 2012

Reviewed by SLT: September 2015

Approved by Education Committee: October 2015

Reviewed by SLT: July 2016

Approved by Education Committee: November 2017

Reviewed by Executive: September 2018

Approved by Education Committee: March 2019

Reviewed by Executive: October 2021

Approved by Education Committee: November 2021

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