



Attendance Policy

The King's School
Cadhay Lane
Ottery-St-Mary
Devon
EX11 1RA

Aim

The aim of this policy on attendance is to enable maximum student attendance in Years 7 to 11 by encouraging parents to ensure that their children take full advantage of their educational opportunities and offer equality of opportunity by regular and punctual attendance at school. In particular, this policy seeks to:

1. Establish and maintain a high level of attendance.
2. Raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for staff, students, parents and Trustees.
3. Ensure attendance procedures are effective and consistent.
4. Ensure the marking of registers is completed accurately, consistently, reliably and within agreed timescales. Attendance data will be used to provide an effective monitoring system and to inform practice and target resources.
5. Develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data in order to target attendance related issues.
6. Identify students and groups of students whose absence is giving cause for concern and target resources to work toward the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.
7. Promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community, including staff, parents and students are aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution.

Rationale

To maximise attendance at school and make this a priority, the school will seek creative solutions to attendance problems wherever possible, recognising any particular needs of individuals or groups. This includes the use of curricular flexibility – and educational alternatives at Key Stage 4 – as appropriate. Close links are maintained with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the Devon County Council Inclusion Team in order to provide additional support. Students are expected to attend the school full-time, on time, unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. Parents are expected to work closely with school staff in resolving any difficulties at an early stage. The school will operate in accordance with the prescribed regulations regarding the marking of registers, granting of leave, the removal of students from roll and the authorisation of absence. Any concerns about attendance should be referred to the appropriate Head of House who will involve the Deputy Head – Student Support and the EWO if necessary.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Guidelines for Implementation of the Attendance Policy**Managing Absence**

- Approval for holidays during term is not an entitlement and permission has to be sought from the Head Teacher using the appropriate form. The Head Teacher discusses these requests with the DHT-Student Support who will then liaise with the Attendance Officer to ensure that the holiday is correctly recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Holiday absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- The King's School will report unauthorised absences for holidays in term time of 10 or more half-day sessions in a 6-month period to Devon County Council. Devon County Council will then decide whether to issue a penalty notice.
- The school will inform parents of the policy on term time holidays and the implications on an annual basis.

Class Teachers

- Ensure that registers are accurately completed and sent electronically for each lesson unless there is no access to ICT.
- Identify, within each lesson, any students who clearly should be present in the lesson but are not and inform the Pastoral Support Workers as soon as possible.
- When a student is known to have truanted from a lesson, follow this up by making sure they have caught up the missed work in detention time.
- Ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for long-term absentees where appropriate so that return to school is made as easy as possible.
- Ensure that those who return from long-term absence are provided with appropriate support to enable them to access the learning within the lesson.

The Form Tutor

- It is a legal requirement to ensure that registers for morning sessions are accurately completed and sent electronically by the end of registration.

- The school register opens at 8.45am. Any students arriving after the register is started must be marked as late. In exceptional cases if a register cannot be taken electronically tutors must ensure that a paper copy is returned to Student Support promptly.
- Tackle any instances of inappropriate absence with the student and alert the Head of House so that parental contact can be made
- Keep registers up to date with reasons in liaison with the Attendance Administrator.
- Encourage high attendance through constant reinforcement of the importance of regular attendance in school.
- Liaise with the Head of House as early as possible where there are issues of attendance and punctuality with individual students. Inform students when sanctions such as detentions are imposed.

Head of House

- Monitor carefully the attendance of students within the House, taking note of any patterns amongst students from particular groups, particular times of the week or particular subject areas. Inform Deputy Head – Student Support of any identified patterns and contact parents as appropriate.
- Liaise with the Deputy Head teacher – Student Support to decide upon referrals to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Liaise with the Pastoral Support Workers, Learning Coaches or SEN Key Workers to ensure that students with poor attendance are receiving appropriate levels of support.
- Liaise with Learning Coaches to ensure that targeted Pupil Premium students are being supported to improve attendance.
- Monitor particularly closely the attendance of Persistent Absentees, students who are Pupil Premium, students with SEN, children in care, those with deteriorating levels of attendance and those at risk of disaffection.
- Foster a positive attitude to school attendance within the House through assemblies and constant reinforcement with students. Ensure that certificates for excellent attendance are given out each term.
- Liaise with parents to identify ways in which long-term absentees can be reintegrated effectively.
- Implement sanctions where there have been instances of truancy or unacceptable lateness.
- Keep form tutors informed of action taken in relation to particular students.

Attendance Administrator

- Operate personal first day contact for all students who have not given a reason for absence and follow up as appropriate.
- Administer the registration system, noting where registers have not been completed or have not been completed accurately and take appropriate action.
- Ensure that the school's official registers are in line with legal requirements and that any anomalies are reported to the Deputy Head teacher – Student Support.
- Provide regular relevant data on lateness and attendance to Heads of House and Deputy Head teacher – Student Support.
- Maintain the attendance spreadsheet.
- Contact parents and record responses where absences have remained unexplained.
- Provide relevant data and information for the EWO.
- Administer the attendance rewards systems, liaising closely with Heads of House.
- Add and remove students from the school in line with the school's policy on Admissions.
- Alert the Head of House and Deputy Head teacher- Student Support when a student has fifteen days of absence (cumulative or consecutive) due to illness or other health needs.

Learning Coaches

- Build relationships with Pupil Premium students and their families to encourage a closer affinity with the school and high attendance.

- Monitor the attendance of Pupil Premium students carefully and liaise with form tutors, Heads of House and/or Pastoral Support Workers if a student is causing concern.
- Discuss attendance concerns with Pupil Premium students and their families.
- Develop incentives for Pupil Premium students to attend school more regularly and reward as appropriate.

Pastoral Support Workers

- In liaison with the appropriate Head of House, investigate instances of suspected truancy and take appropriate action, including making initial contact with parents.
- Keep in contact with long-term absentees and liaise with Heads of House to ensure that effective reintegration strategies are used, identifying “catch up” needs.
- Work with targeted students to improve attendance through parental contact, home visits, short-term targets and rewards. Particular attention will be paid to students with attendance below 93% and those falling into the Persistent Absentee category.
- Work with Heads of House to involve outside agencies with individuals and groups of students.
- Liaise with Learning Coaches to ensure that targeted Pupil Premium students are being supported.
- Take part in targeted intervention work directed at groups of poor attendees particularly those with low self-esteem.
- Identify Year 6 students for targeted support on attendance at transition from primary school.

Deputy Head teacher – Student Support

- Take overall responsibility for developing and managing the Attendance Policy within the school.
- Provide line management for the Attendance Administrator and ensure that there is good communication with Heads of House.
- Analyse and track attendance data for patterns of poor attendance amongst identified students and work with Heads of House to take action to address any anomalies and provide reports to the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.
- Oversee the efficient running of the registration system and take action where registers are not being completed accurately.
- Take a lead in promoting the need for good attendance through assemblies, rewards and work with staff and students.
- Decide upon any initial action to be taken to encourage good attendance for any new admissions
- With the Head of House responsible for transition and the Pastoral Support Workers, identify Year 6 students for targeted support on attendance at transition from primary school
- Alert the Devon County Council Inclusion Team when a student has fifteen days of absence (cumulative or consecutive) due to illness or other health needs. Inform parents of such children as to the options available to them.

Parents/Carers

- Ensure that their children understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Take an interest in their children’s education and discuss it with them.
- Liaise with the school about any issues that may be affect their children’s attendance.
- Ensure that they do not allow their children to take time off school for minor ailments.
- Contact the school as soon as possible if any of their children are going to be absent from school.

Students at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to students at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the Deputy Head teacher – Student Support will:

- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Regular reviews
 - Engaging with the Education Welfare Service
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome the student back following any absence
- Meet with the student to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead regular check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make contact with the student's parent to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.

A **telephone call** or Edulink message will be made to the parent of any student who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with students and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

Punctuality

Attending school and lessons on time is of the utmost importance. The school will monitor and follow up students who are late to school with progressive sanctions in place for students who are regularly late.