



Attendance Policy

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

Policy Change Control

Policy Owner	DHT Student Support
Approved By	Curriculum Committee
Date of Last Approval	18/06/2024
Next Revision Due	June 2025

Date	Version	Person	Change / Action
16/06/2016	1.0	Trustees	Adoption of Policy
02/05/2017	1.1	SBM	Update to template and format
30/5/2017	1.2	MAG	Very minor changes to layout.
15/06/2017	1.2	Trustees	Approval
01/06/2018	1.3	MAG	Holidays in term-time amended to reflect the new LLC policy. Specific references to students with 15 or more days of absence due to health needs.
13/06/2018	1.3	Trustees	Approval
31/05/2019	1.4	MAG	Slight amendments.
13/06/2019	1.4	Trustees	Approval
31/05/2020	1.5	MAG	Some amendments made including a new section for Learning Coaches. Comments received from pastoral team, learning coaches and SLT.
12/06/2020	1.5	Trustees	Approval
16/05/2021	1.6	MAG	Several sections added based on model school bus policy including legal framework and definitions, persistent absence, parental involvement, procedures, punctuality.
17/06/2021	1.6	Trustees	Approval
04/06/2022	1.7	MAG	Reviewed in light of new Govt guidance and used the School Bus as a policy template. Sections added on Attendance Register, Authorising Parental Absence Requests, Leave of Absence, Health Related Absences, Absence in Exceptional Circumstances, Truancy and Missing Episodes, Working with Parents to Improve Attendance, Persistent Absence, Legal Intervention.
21/06/2022	1.7	Trustees	Approval
19/05/2023	1.8	MAG	Following the fundamental overall last year, there are only very minor changes to the policy after checking against the updated School Bus policy.
20/06/2023	1.8	Trustees	Approved
12/05/2024	1.9	MAG	Minor changes to reflect the updated School Bus policy and changes to Working Together to Improve School Attendance which becomes statutory for September 2024.
18/05/2024	1.9	Trustees	Approved

Aim

The aim of this policy 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, is aware of their role 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 Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) 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 AIO if necessary.

1. 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 (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (2023)'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance' (Statutory from Sept 2024)
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

2. Definitions

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

Missing Education

Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

3.Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees

Monitoring the implementation of this policy

- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to provide support and challenge around delivery of high attendance.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Class Teachers

- Ensure that registers are accurately completed and sent electronically for each lesson, or a paper copy if there is a technical issue.
- 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 Pastoral Support Worker and 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.
- Ensure that communication home regarding concerns is timely.

- Liaise with the Deputy Head teacher – Student Support to decide upon referrals to the Education Welfare Officer or the Inclusion Wellbeing Team.
- Lead a fortnightly meeting with the linked Pastoral Support Worker and Learning Coach to discuss attendance.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

Attendance Administrator

- Operate personal first day contact for all students who have not given a reason for absence and ensure that is completed as soon as practically possible and follow up as appropriate.
- Aim to have notified all parents regarding any unknown absences by 9.15am each morning.
- Administer the registration system, noting where registers have not been completed at registration or in lessons 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 and linked Pastoral Support Worker 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.

Deputy Head teacher – Student Support

- Take overall responsibility for developing and managing the Attendance Policy within the school.
- Provide line management for the Attendance Administrators and ensure that there is good communication with Heads of House and Pastoral Support Workers.
- 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 affecting 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.

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for students' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and students.

Students will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson unless they are in a pre-arranged alternative

The school day starts at **8.45am**, and students will be in their tutor room by this time. There is a warning bell at 8.43am. Students will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the relevant times. Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8.50am. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by the time the register is started. Students attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:15am**. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- The school will aim to inform all parents of any children with unexplained absence by 9.15am.
- The afternoon register will be marked by **2.15pm**. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom at the start of the register.
- Class teachers will also take the register at the start of each lesson to ensure that students are attending all timetabled lessons. The member of staff marks the register for those students in front of them and puts in a comment if they think they know where they are.
- The member of staff supervising the student who is out of lesson will mark the register with a "1" code. This links with the present code so will not affect attendance statistics but also helps the teacher keep a track of who has attended which lessons. A comment should also be made as to their whereabouts.
- Registers will be checked each lesson by the Attendance Administrator to ensure that the whereabouts of every student is known.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via the absence line or absence@thekings.devon.sch.uk as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.

A telephone call or Edulink message will be sent as soon as possible 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.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a student is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistent absence the Pastoral Support Worker or Head of House will contact the parents to discuss the barriers and a plan for improvement. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 30 or more sessions.

6. Attendance register

The school uses an electronic management information system to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether students are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. These codes will be changing from September 2024 and the updated codes are in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant students who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Students who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

Students out on trips or enrichment activities

- Staff should give the Attendance Administrator a list of students going out of school at least 24 hours in advance.
- Staff should complete a register before they leave the site and ensure that the Attendance Administrator is aware of any anomalies so that there is an accurate record of who is out of school.

Peripatetic Music Lessons

- The peripatetic teacher should ensure that the Attendance Administrator is informed of any lessons at the start of the school day.

Interventions

- Students taken out for interventions, are in student support, counselling, skills should be marked with an N by their teacher.
- The member of staff supervising the student who is out of lesson will mark the register with a “1” code. This links with the present code so will not affect attendance statistics but also helps the teacher keep a track of who has attended which lessons. A comment should also be made as to their whereabouts.

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.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

- Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance through filling in the S2 absence form available from the school website. The decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the discretion of the Headteacher, who will liaise with the Deputy Headteacher – Student Support. The Headteacher’s decision is not subject to appeal;

however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will follow relevant guidance in making their decision

- 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.

8. Leave of absence

The school will only grant a student a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing by completing the S2 absence form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the student can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance. The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the student's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a student's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for students from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. Health-related absences

The school recognises that students with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support students who find attending school difficult.

In line with the Positive Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy and Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHC plans that have been implemented. The school will aim secure additional support from external partners, such as the Inclusion Team, to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a student's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a student that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All students will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Positive Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy. If a student is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a student is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.

- Help the student reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the student is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the student to stay in contact with other students during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any students with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the student is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of students with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Opening a case on Rights for Children to gain wider support from outside agencies.
- Identifying students' unmet needs.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a student to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a student can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby students can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Absence in exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a student is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent is not available and the student's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the student from attending.
- The student is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

10. Truancy and Students Missing from Lessons

- Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of students, and understand the importance of continuity in each student's learning.
- Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out in Student Support and sign back in again on their return.
- Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Attendance Administrator or the linked Pastoral Support Worker will contact the parent in order to inform the parent and/or assess the reasons behind the student not attending school. The Head of House will be also be notified, and they will work closely with the Pastoral Support Worker to ensure that the truancy is followed up.

The Head of House will take the appropriate action to ensure that students understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

11. Working with parents to improve attendance

- The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build 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.
- The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each student wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a student where the student is absent without notification or authorisation.

- The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.
- If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Head of House and/or Pastoral Support Worker and/or Learning Coach will work collaboratively with the student and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the student from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for student absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.
- Where these barriers are related to the student's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Head of House, PSW or Learning Coach will work with other relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the student's family, the Head of House will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need

12. Persistent Absence

There are various groups of students who may be vulnerable to high absence such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Students who are eligible for FSM or are Pupil Premium
- Students with EAL
- Students with SEND
- Students who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

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

The school will use a number of methods to help support students at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the student and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the student's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed.

The school will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these students are facing.

Where a student at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the student in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

13. Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve students' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the Deputy Head – Student Support will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents /carers and the school's point of contact in the Student Support Team
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract, an education supervision order or legal prosecution in place.

- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.