



the *King's* school

specialising in maths and computing

Safeguarding Attendance Policy



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1 Policy Statement

'School Attendance Matters - at The King's School, we strive to achieve high attendance rates so that all students are able to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them and can enjoy and achieve. We believe that a good education supports and challenges students to make a positive contribution to their schools and communities and enables them to reach economic well being as they approach adulthood. We aim to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality'.

2 Purpose

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, amended Education Act 2002, 2005 and Education regulations 2006 and 2007, a student is required to attend regularly at the school where s/he is a registered student. These have been updated in June 2013 and statutory legislation will come into force in September 2013. We are obliged by law to record and differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence and to identify persistent absence.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

3 Scope

This Policy will be used by all staff and will apply to all students regardless of age and ability.

4 Responsibility

Excellent attendance at the King's School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - students, parents and staff.

Staff - The King's School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each student feels safe and secure. All school staff employ a range of strategies and will operate the schools system of incentives and rewards which acknowledge the efforts of students with high or improved attendance and punctuality. The School and staff will challenge and investigate cases of absenteeism and all students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Students - All students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. The school will encourage good attendance by rewarding students and students should collect their clean week credits, half term credits, vouchers and certificates.

Parents - Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, the school will request parents to notify the school on the first day of non-attendance - by phone call, supported by a note in the planner or a letter on the student's return. A student's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent. Parents will be informed promptly, by the school, of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. There is also a structured and calendared school system of warning letters to inform parents when their child's attendance has fallen below the school target and other attendance thresholds. This operates before the Education Welfare Service become involved.

The school will request parents to avoid making routine medical/dental appointments during school hours unless due to an emergency.

5 Publicity

A statement regarding the Attendance Policy will be made on all publicity materials, all new staff and students recruited to the School will be made aware of it. The policy will be posted on the Staff Shared (G) drive of the school IT network and the school website.

GUIDANCE

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Parents and students should only plan absences from lessons if there is no alternative and the reason is a good one. In these circumstances, you will need to place a note in the Student Planner and provide supporting evidence before the event where possible. Where absences cannot be foreseen in advance the parent or student should let school know as soon as possible on the same day (failure to do so may mean that the absence is not authorised).

Absence from school *will* be authorised if it is for the reasons listed below -

- Illness.
- Unavoidable Hospital/Orthodontist's appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours, backed by evidence of an appointment card (confidential information could be removed).
- Relevant Religious Festival.
- Close family bereavement - in this case a phone call will be acceptable in the first instance followed by a note from a parent or a responsible adult.
- Attendance at the funeral of a close family member or friend.
- A career related/College interview (appointment letter must be provided).
- A Work Experience placement.
- Participating in school run extra-curricular activity, such as Drama, Music, Sport etc.
- With an LA Licence to allow absence for sports competitions and Performing Arts such as participating in Drama/Film and Theatre productions.
- Attendance at a Probation meeting/Court appearance.
- Authorised study leave.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may give cause for consideration, such as the number of absences already taken, repetitions of the same excuse and whether students are able to provide suitable evidence.

Parents should liaise with school to authorise their absences.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Absence from school *will not* be authorised for-

- Holidays during term time (see below).
- Doctor's/Dentist's routine appointments.
- Looking after brothers, sisters or sick parents.
- Looking after the house.
- Accompanying family members to appointments.
- Birthdays.
- Shopping.
- Leisure activities.
- Unsatisfactory absence notes.
- Patterns of absence which arouse suspicion after investigation.
- Periods during school or external examinations especially SATs and GCSEs.

LATENESS

School starts at 8.50am when students are expected to be in their Tutor rooms. Registration closes at 8.55am and students arriving after that time may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Repeated Unauthorised absence sessions for lateness could result in a Fixed Penalty fine being issued in line with Government and LA code of conduct.

Students should attend all lessons on their timetable punctually. If a student knows that they are going to be late to a lesson, they must have a note in their Student Planner. If late into school students should sign in at the KS3 Student Services Office.

Valid reasons for lateness may be that the bus did not arrive/broke down etc. NOT that the bus was missed. Unauthorised lateness will result in school sanctions being administered (3 lates in a half-term will result in a school detention).

HOLIDAYS

We will make parents aware that they do not have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. According to the new amendments of the Education Regulations 2006 that have been published this year then the school cannot grant any leave of absence during term time. Headteachers have the right to grant leave of absence only for exceptional circumstances and should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. If there are exceptional circumstances then parents need to apply in advance, by letter, to the Headteacher of the school. Any days taken without permission granted from the school will be regarded as unauthorised and may incur Fixed Penalty fines in line with LA guidelines. Parents are asked to be aware that any absence from school is detrimental to a child's education and should, therefore, be avoided if at all possible.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

We will work closely with the Education Welfare Service in maintaining high levels of attendance and will look towards the Education Welfare Officer for support in dealing with matters of non-attendance. Where attendance does not improve a Referral process takes place which involves letters, visits, meetings, Fixed Penalty fines and ultimately prosecution. Parents may also be involved in School Parenting Contracts which include attendance and/or LA Parenting Orders which could result in Court action.