

# POLICY

## Attendance

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| Date of approval by governing body: | 15 November 2017                 |
| Updated:                            | November 2017                    |
| Review date:                        | Summer 2018                      |
| Policy Owner:                       | Assistant Headteacher: Inclusion |

**The King's has a pivotal role to play in every student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through our mission to ensure that every student learns with truth and love, we ensure that we support each student through the promotion of the Christian values of justice, grace, trust, thankfulness, aspiration and celebration (as identified, by students, staff and governors). This mission and these values underpin this policy and its related practices.**

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### **Policy Objectives**

- To ensure all students take full advantage of opportunities for learning in school;
- To ensure the well-being and safety of students at The King's School;
- To set school targets for attendance;
- To promote and encourage 100% attendance for all students;
- To monitor student absence and to analyse the reasons for that absence;
- To reduce disruption to students' education through unnecessary absence.

### **Policy Intentions**

- To monitor regular or extended absence and take steps to mitigate such absence;
- To work with EWW (Educational Welfare Worker) to ensure no child is absent without school being aware of the reason;
- To ensure that discretionary power to grant leave is only used in exceptional circumstances.

### **Teaching and Learning Impact**

#### *Registration and Absence Procedures*

All absences will be recorded on school registers using standard codes. Any student who is on roll but not present in school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. **Unauthorised** Absence: This is for students where no reason has been given or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This can occur if a child arrives after 08.45.
2. **Authorised** Absence: This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. **Approved Educational Activity:** This covers types any authorized offsite educational activity.

Students who arrive late to school (after 08.40) must enter the building via the main entrance and will be signed in. If they arrive after registers have closed at 08.45 they will receive a late mark in the register. The Education Welfare Workers hold 'late gates'; issue notices to parents/carers who arrive to school late. This is done on a half termly, or termly basis.

### **Equality and Inclusion**

All students will be treated equally. We work closely with the school nurse to support students with severe disabilities or illnesses.

### **Registration principles**

- The King's will ensure that staff are aware of any new legislation with student registration;
- Registers are to be completed accurately at the beginning of every lesson;
- Parents are made aware of the importance of contacting school to report absence before 08.30;
- Senior Managers and School Governors will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of absence procedures;
- Regular reports will be provided for the Governing Body of The King's School.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

Each class teacher will take a register at the start of every lesson or chapter session. On each occasion relevant staff will record whether every student is present, absent or late.

The Attendance Officer will follow up any absences to:

1. Ascertain the reason;
2. Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
3. Identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and,
4. Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

### **Parent/Carer responsibilities**

It is a parent's responsibility to inform school of any reasons for a child's absence, before 8.30 am, each day that they are absent from school (unless otherwise arranged with school) and to provide further information as required. The process for notification is included as part of students' planners and indicates a phone call or contact on the first day of absence. The school will send a letter requesting information if an explanation has not been received and will refer the matter to the school's EWW (Educational Welfare Worker) if no response is forthcoming.

### **Leave of Absence during Term Time**

As the result of a recent change to the The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, Headteachers are now only permitted to authorise any leave of absence when a request has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance (NB: the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance").

Parents should contact the school to find out how to make a request for permission. We would strongly recommend that this is done before planning any leave of absence.

### **What happens if a child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the school?**

The absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per parent per child being issued by the Local Authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

### **Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- There will be no limit on the number of Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave of absence can be issued in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one student in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

### **Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time**

- Historically a Penalty Notice was issued if the student's overall attendance was below 87%. This threshold has now been removed;
- Historically only one Penalty Notice per student was issued within an academic year. This limit has been removed;
- Historically students missing 10 sessions or five days taken together risked a Penalty Notice. Now any leave of absence above 2 sessions (one day) – consecutive or otherwise - could trigger a Penalty Notice;
- Instead of monitoring and totalling holiday absences taken across each academic year, they will now be monitored across the previous two terms, regardless of academic year.

### **Penalty Notice for persistent absence**

Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents of students attending a medical appointment during the school day need to produce an appointment card/letter or similar paperwork prior to the appointment. Where possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. We can then confirm lateness as a 'medical' absence and therefore the session can be authorized, so long as the child attends school during the morning / afternoon session. Routine authorization for medical appointments is for a maximum of 3 hours – above this, unless reasons are provided, the school reserves the right to unauthorise part of the period of absence.

### **School Action on Repeated Absence**

Where a child is persistently late or absent, even if the Headteacher has been informed, the following steps will be taken:

1. A letter will be sent home informing parents of the number of late arrivals.
2. If lateness persists then the parents will be contacted by the Educational Welfare Worker.

Please note that any lateness or unexplained absence will be monitored by the EWW as a matter of course.

Schools and EWWs must now adhere to the 'Code of Conduct under the Provision of the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003'.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Attendance is overseen by the Attendance Manager, who maintains a record of students' attendance rates and reasons for absence. In addition our Inclusion Team works closely with the Local Support Team to discuss individual cases and decide on appropriate next steps, hold 'late-gates' and look at whole-school improvements or concerns relating to attendance statistics.

### **Links to documents**

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>