



ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

Key School contacts

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Staff responsibilities

The SAC (Senior Attendance Champion)

The Proprietor has appointed a senior member of staff of the College's leadership team as SAC to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Details of the individual appointed are above and are widely publicised within School.

The SAC's responsibilities are:

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

School responsibilities

Epsom College acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school community.

Epsom College will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.

Where there are challenges to attendance, Epsom College will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

Epsom College will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the College's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

Epsom College will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

Registration

All Senior School pupils are registered twice a day by their Housemaster/mistress in the houses – before the start of morning school at 8.20am, and immediately after lunch at 1.40pm Monday to Friday (there is no formal Registration at 1.40pm on Saturday, but all pupils not in school matches are expected to attend a roll call in Houses at 3.00pm).

All Lower School pupils are registered twice a day. Before the start of morning school by their Form Tutor at 8.25am, and immediately after lunch at 1.00pm Monday to Friday by the subject teacher who is due to deliver the lesson at 1.05pm. There is no formal Registration on Saturdays.

All pupils are required to attend Registration, and we structure the school day such that there are very few occasions when a pupil would need to be absent from Registration. On these occasions alternative arrangements are made to record where the pupil is.

A list of absentees is then posted onto the College's management information system (iSAMS) to which all teaching staff have access. Attendance data is stored in this electronic database.

Senior School day pupils are expected to leave the school promptly after the end of the school day following a Roll call at 6pm, unless they are involved in a school activity after this time. For boarding pupils evening roll calls are held in each boarding house at 6.00pm and again at 6.55pm after dinner. Pupils are only permitted to leave the boarding houses after this time with the prior permission of the Housemaster/Housemistress to attend College events. They are expected to sign out when they leave, and sign back in when they return to the boarding house.

Lower School pupils are expected to leave the school promptly after the end of the school day, whether they are being collected at 5.00pm or if they are staying for the supervised prep session until 6.00pm. The Head of Lower School is responsible for ensuring that all Lower School pupils have left the College safely at the end of the day. If the Head of Lower School is unable to undertake this task then they will deputise one of the Lower School Heads of Year or another member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any pupil that leaves the College during the school day, to attend a medical appointment, for example, is

expected to sign out at Lower School Reception when they leave, and sign back in when they return to the Lower School.

Absence

If a pupil is going to be absent from school for any reason – be it illness, a medical appointment, interview or some other valid reason – then Senior School parents are asked to notify the Housemaster/mistress or Matron by 8.20am on the first day of absence. If he or she is not available, staff at Main School Reception will pass on a message. At the end of the period of absence a note which can be in the form of an e-mail should be brought or sent to the Housemaster/mistress. Lower School Parents are asked to notify the Head of Lower School or Lower School Receptionist by 8.25am on the first day of absence. At the end of the period of absence a note which can be in the form of an e-mail should be brought or sent to the Head of Lower School.

Term dates are published well in advance, and no pupil should expect to be allowed to leave early. Permission is needed from the Headmaster and is only granted in very special circumstances, as it creates difficult precedents and inconveniences teachers. In particular pupils who live overseas should arrange flights to avoid an early departure at the end of a term or a late arrival at the start of a term.

From time to time, opportunities do arise for pupils to attend concerts, sports matches etc. in school time which, for boarding pupils, includes evenings. The College is always prepared to consider requests from parents for pupils to be absent from school to attend such events, but we do ask for as much notice as possible and supportive acceptance if for any reason we feel that permission should not be granted. Pupils will only be granted leave to be absent from school in exceptional circumstances.

At Epsom, we firmly believe that regular school attendance is fundamental to pupil success and achievement. Research consistently demonstrates that pupils who attend school consistently perform better academically. Missing even a few days of school can significantly impact a pupil's progress and attainment. Therefore, we strongly encourage parents and guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Monitoring attendance

The College will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the College and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

- monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to the Head of Lower School, HMMs and HoYs to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
- conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;

- monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and
- providing data and reports to the Head and Governors to support their work.

Pupil responsibilities

1.1 School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. Epsom College therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.

1.2 Pupils should be aware that:

- 1.2.1 they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day;
- 1.2.2 they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- 1.2.3 they should not leave a lesson or the College site without permission or otherwise in accordance with school rules and expectations;
- 1.2.4 they should engage with the College's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy and or the school rules;
- 1.2.5 any unexplained absence will be followed up;
- 1.2.6 persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the College. This may take the form of:
 - (a) offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
 - (b) communication with parents;
 - (c) reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and
 - (d) sanctions against them or their parents in line with the College's behaviour policies.
- 1.2.7 If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the College encourages them to speak to their Housemaster / Mistress, Head of Lower School in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

When a pupil's attendance falls below certain thresholds, we take specific actions:

- If attendance falls below 90%, parents will receive a letter from the Assistant Head: Systems, alerting them to the situation.
- If attendance falls below 85%, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Assistant Head: Systems.
- If attendance falls below 80%, we will collaborate with Surrey Inclusion Officers to ensure that pupils receive the necessary support to attend school regularly.

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their child's attendance; we value open communication with parents and encourage them to notify the school promptly if their child cannot attend.

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- contact the school before 8.00am on the morning of each day of the pupil's absence by contacting your HMM. Any unexplained absence is recorded as unauthorised absence
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school

Note: Participation in extracurricular activities, including after school outings and school journeys, is dependent on the pupil attending school for the whole day.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, the school will respond in the following manner:

- If no telephone call is received from the parent/carer, the school will activate the 'First Day Absence' call; the system will call/text the parent/carer contact numbers until a response is received
- If there is no response from the parent/carer then the school will call other the other contacts associated with the absent pupil
- In the event that no response or follow up letter is received; the absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- If there is no response from the parent/carer after 2 days of unauthorised absence, the Assistant Head: Systems will be notified
- Further contact will be attempted to the parents/carers and if necessary, a home visit will be conducted

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences, including truancy, are recorded on a pupil's registration certificate, which may be used as a point of reference for future employers, colleges or universities.

Absences that the school is unable to authorise include, but are not limited to:

- Shopping trips, even if this is for school uniform
- Treat days out
- Looking after a relative/pets
- Trips to the hairdresser/other non-medical related appointments
- Inability to participate in a school activity
- Tiredness following participation in extra-curricular activities
- Family holidays outside of school holidays

Leaving the College site

For Senior School pupils, permission from the Housemaster/mistress is required to leave the College grounds during the school day. Pupils leaving are to return by 6.00pm at the latest. Full school uniform must be worn at all times.

Senior School pupils must inform their Housemaster/mistress if they are going on an official College visit. Parents are asked to give written authority to their child's Housemaster/mistress before they leave the school to stay with another family. The College expects all pupils to sign out whenever they leave the school and to sign in on return.

Lower School pupils may not leave the College campus during school hours unless accompanied by a parent or guardian or, as part of an organised school activity, in the company of a designated member of teaching staff. All pupils on College trips away for study or pleasure must comply with College off-site regulations.

Missing Pupils

A pupil who is not present for registration, or is absent from a lesson, activity etc. is deemed to be a missing pupil. All members of staff are instructed to report a missing Senior School pupil to his or her Housemaster/mistress or a missing Lower School pupil to the Head of Lower School as soon as possible. The following procedure is then followed (with a record kept of each action):

- The Medical Centre is contacted to see if the pupil has reported sick.
- A thorough search of the whole school is set in hand by as many staff as possible.
- The teachers who taught that pupil earlier in the day and other pupils are questioned in order to ascertain at what time he/she went missing.
- **A phone call would be made to the pupil's parents or guardian explaining what has happened, describing the steps that have been set in motion and inviting them to come to the school at once.**
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Head are informed.
- A fire drill might be held in order to ensure that he/she is not on the site.
- The Police are contacted, and their advice would be followed.
- The DSL informs the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- The Chairman of Governors is informed.
- A report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.
- Ofsted/ISI/CME would be informed as appropriate.
- The insurers would be informed.
- A full investigation into the circumstances would be carried out. Witnesses would be interviewed and asked to provide written statement.

Lesson Registration

Teachers are required to register their class in ISAMs using their Surface Pro Tablet for the relevant period they are teaching to that class. This will allow teachers to see the full day and follow relevant morning or afternoon registration codes as required.

Missing Pupil – Lesson Registration Protocol

Where possible if a pupil is not going to be in a lesson due to an authorised absence the pupil's registration will be marked "out of school" with the relevant code prior to the lesson / day in question by the relevant HMM and /or matron, or Lower School staff as applicable.

If a pupil is missing from your lesson you should do the following:

- Check the registration code from either the morning or afternoon registration as applicable and adopt the code used by the relevant HMM / Head of Lower School / Form tutor for your lesson.
- If the pupil was present in the House or Lower School morning or afternoon registration period but is missing from your lesson you should:
 - Check the daily email from the Assistant Head (Teaching Staff).
 - If relevant detail is not in this email, or in subsequent communication, or in your knowledge of the pupil and the pupil remains absent, ie you are not 100% sure of their whereabouts, you **MUST**
 - Mark the pupil with an N code and click the alert button.
 - If the pupil is marked as an N please remember to go back and change this code if the pupil subsequently arrives to your lesson or you learn of their whereabouts.

Once the alert button is pressed an email is sent to the relevant HMM and Matron, the DSL and the registration Champion (plus relevant admin staff). Upon receipt of this email, the above protocol and steps are taken.

Activity sessions - registration is recorded through the use of SOCs which is linked to our ISAMs management information system. Staff who take an activity during the day are expected to register pupils for their activity accordingly. Absences are co-ordinated by HMM / Matron / Lower School and reminders regarding registering pupils are sent to staff if the register is not taken.

Children Missing from Education¹

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education, particularly persistent absences, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may also include abuse or neglect. All staff should follow the College's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly persistent absences, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Epsom College has in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly persistent absences. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding

¹ See KCSIE 2024 – p178 for more information

concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation, honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

The College will inform our local authority (SCC) of any pupil who is going to be removed from the admission register where the pupil:

- has been taken out of the College by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has ceased to attend the College and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- has been certified by the College Medical Officers as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue attending school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the Head does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the College at the end of that period; or,
- has been permanently excluded.

The local authority will be notified when the College is to remove a pupil from its register for any of the five grounds above. This should be done as soon as these grounds for removal from the register are met, and in any event no later than removing the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education and follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Information sharing

- **Personal information** on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.
- Epsom College, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).
- Where appropriate Epsom College will attend regular targeted support meetings.
- Epsom College is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority.
 - As a minimum this includes:
 - New pupil and deletion returns;
 - Attendance returns;
 - Sickness returns.
 - The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education

Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the College's registers.

- The College must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State. [Epsom College meets this requirement by having an electronic management information system containing the required information and data that can be accessed by the DfE if required. The College also uses this tool to monitor pupil level attendance and understand trends in attendance patterns.]

The College will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the College's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the College and local authority.