



King
Egbert
School

Attendance Policy and Procedures

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Governors/Committee Meeting:	Curriculum and Personnel
Signature of Chair:	<i>Chris Newman</i>

King Egbert School Attendance Policy and Procedures

At King Egbert School we want our students to:

- Be motivated and enjoy learning
- Develop a range of skills to equip them for a successful adult life, such as independence and ambition
- Be confident, responsible, happy and feel safe
- Be friendly, respectful, caring and polite
- Experience success every day

In a school that:

- Fosters individual talents and abilities in every child
- Has high expectations for its self, its staff and students
- Celebrates success and achievement in all its forms
- Values the role parents and carers play
- Is continually striving to improve

1.0 Introduction

We believe that for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education and consequently to have the best start in life, it is vital that they attend school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Students often find it difficult to catch up on learning that they have missed through absence. If absence is frequent, the student will experience a slowing of their progress and feel they are falling behind their peers. This can affect how a student feels about school and can make their attendance even worse. A downward spiral of attendance can occur rapidly.

There is a clear link between attendance and academic attainment. Statistics suggest that a student whose attendance is below 90% will drop at least one grade (3 sub-levels) across all their subjects.

Regular patterns of attendance are vital for young people to maintain friendships and peer networks. Students with regular absence can quickly feel isolated from their peers and this again affects how they might feel about coming to school. Good attendance is important if students are to participate in and enjoy school community events like sporting fixtures, drama and music productions and charity fundraising events.

Student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Teachers are not always in a position to provide one-to-one tuition to students who fall behind in their learning.

Post 16 establishments and employers will want to be sure that the people they are thinking of recruiting are reliable. So students who have not attended school regularly have less chance of getting a Post 16 course of their choice or have less chance of getting a job.

Young people who are off school for no good reason are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse. They may also be drawn into anti-social behaviour.

2.0 Policy

School will work in partnership with parents and students to maximise every students' attendance. In addition to preventative strategies to promote attendance, flexible educational support plans will be devised to support students with persistent absence. If an individual referral is made to the Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) then the school will continue to collaborate with others to resolve the attendance problem. School will use the full range of voluntary and statutory procedures available to it in an escalated approach. Safeguarding children procedures will always override any escalated response.

School will set annual whole school attendance targets and create an annual school attendance plan to achieve this target.

In order to achieve the aims of this policy the school will have Attendance procedures in 9 areas that are reviewed annually:

- The law
- Type of absence
- Holidays in term time
- Visits to heritage homelands
- Expectations of stakeholders
- Promoting and celebrating regular attendance
- Interventions and legal sanctions
- Support available for students and families

Linked policies

Anti-bullying Policy and Procedures
Behaviour and Discipline Policy
Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures
Complaints Policy and Procedures

3.0 Procedures

3.1 The law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are responsible for making sure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child has regular attendance at school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at school then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent/carer, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, Section 444(1A) as amended by Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

The definition of a parent/carer is any adult who lives in the home or homes where the student resides.

By law a student must currently remain in education until the last Friday in June in the school year in which she/he reaches the age of 16.

3.2 Sixth form attendance

By 2015, young people will have to stay on in education, training or apprenticeship until they are 18.

Students in the King Ecgbert School Sixth Form are allowed to self-certify up to five instances of illness (only three before Christmas). Beyond this, only those backed up by additional medical evidence or a conversation with a parent will be authorised.

Students or their parents are expected to telephone the sixth form office on the first day of their absence. Where appropriate, students should contact their subject teachers by e-mail to get work that they can either work on at home or to catch-up on.

School recognises the importance of visits by students to make informed choices about university applications. This needs to be balanced with the demands of sixth form academic studies. Many universities hold open days at weekends and students should try to attend these where possible but they may take up to two days in each academic year to attend university open days. As with all other absences, sixth form students must inform subject teachers and the sixth form office in advance.

Attendance level	Action (HOY = Head of Year; AO = Attendance Officer)
>95%	Attendance monitored by AO. Self-certification for absence. Student responsibility to call school by 9am. Medical appointments should be arranged outside lesson time if possible. If absent, students should email subject teachers and catch up work missed. Eligible for negotiated study.
90% - 95%	Conversation with HOY. Importance of good attendance explained. Warning about consequences of falling below 90% attendance. Inclusion in Attendance Monitoring Group – HOY to review attendance of group with AO on a weekly basis. Not eligible for negotiated study.
Below 90%	Letter sent home. Students placed on attendance report – register with AO before am and pm lessons. This to be reviewed after three weeks. Appt card needed for medical appointments and doctors note/note from home required for illness. Not eligible for negotiated study.
Consistently below 90% or falls below 80% (excluding those with extenuating circumstances)	If attendance continues to fall, five point plan adopted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report to sixth form office 2. Formal meeting with HOY and member of SLT 3. Return on to report if drop below 85% again 4. Formal warning – meeting to include parents 5. Asked to leave the sixth form – this would not be without considerable intervention work first.

3.3 Types of absence

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. The classification decision is taken by school and not by parents/carers.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school do not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. When school considers a students' absence to be high or following an unusual pattern, then parents/carers may be asked to provide additional medical evidence to help explain any illness absence. Additional medical evidence may include a doctor's appointment card or photocopy of a pharmacy prescription with medical details erased. The purpose of parents/carers providing additional medical evidence is to help school make fair and objective decisions over which absences are genuine and which are non-genuine illness. School will not pay for any charges incurred by the writing of a doctor's note. Letters sent to parents/carers requesting additional medical evidence will be copied to the student's registered GP according to school records.

If a parent/carer has contacted school either by telephone or in writing about their child's absence within 3 days of the first day of absence then the school will normally authorise the absence.

If the school has previously written to the parent/carer for additional medical evidence and none is provided then the absence will be classified as unauthorised.

If the school believes it has good reason to classify an absence as unauthorised despite having contact with the parent/carer, then the parent/carer will be informed. Likewise, if a student absence is changed at a later date from authorised to unauthorised for whatever reason, then the parent/carer will be informed.

Unauthorised absence can lead to the Local Authority or the school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

These include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy (missing lessons – whether the student stays on the school site or not)
- Absences which are not properly explained
- Students who arrive to school after registers have closed
- Students absent from school because they are shopping, looking after other children or because it is their birthday
- Day trips or holidays during term time which are not agreed by school

3.4 Punctuality

The law covering the parental responsibility of ensuring their child attends school regularly also applies to students arriving to school on time. At King Ecgbert School, students in Years 7 to 11 must be in their registration form room (or Dining room waiting to go up to assembly) by 8:45am. Consequently, it is recommended that students arrive to school and are on site by 8:30am. If a student arrives to their registration form room later than 8:45am then they are late.

If a student is late, they will receive an “L” late mark and will be placed in a punctuality detention on the same day (12:27pm – 12:50pm). If a student arrives in school after 9:30am then they will be placed in an after-school detention (3:15pm – 4:00pm). If a student is late to twice or more in a week, they will be placed in a Headteacher’s punctuality detention (12:27pm – 1:07pm with lunch eaten in the detention).

If a student continues to be frequently late, parents/carers will be contacted by phone and by letter to remind them of their legal responsibility to ensure their child arrives to school on time. If punctuality still does not improve, then parents/carers will be invited to an attendance panel.

3.4 Holidays in term time

Taking holiday during school term time will affect a child’s schooling as much as any other absence and school expects parents/carers not to take children away during term time. School believes that any savings that may be made by taking a holiday during term time is offset by the cost to the child’s education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. At King Ecgbert School, the Headteacher will only authorise holiday in term time in the most exceptional circumstances.

Request for leave of absence during term time must be submitted on the correct form (available from school reception) at least one month before the first date of absence and preferably before any booking has been made. School is not liable for any cancellation or alteration charges incurred by a family as a result of school not authorising a holiday during term time.

Parents/carers who do not request term time leave and take their child(ren) on ‘unauthorised leave’, or fail to keep the school informed of changes to leave arrangements, may receive a fine, be prosecuted and/or the child(ren) may lose their place at King Ecgbert School.

3.5 Expectations of key stakeholders

Students

- Arrive at school by 8:30am for registration to start at 8:45am
- Be on time for registration and all lessons
- Hand in any letter or note from your parent/carer explaining an absence to Student Reception within 3 days of the first day of absence
- If late in the morning, sign in at Student Reception and attend the punctuality detention the same day
- If late to school more than twice in the same week, then attend the Headteacher’s punctuality detention on Friday
- If you need to leave early from school, sign out at Student Reception
- Tell your form tutor, Head of Year/Year Manager, or any other member of staff in school you trust if you are having any problems attending school, e.g. you are being bullied, feeling unhappy or have problems at home

Parents/carers

- Ensure that children attend school on time every day
- Telephone school to report that your child will not be in school and the reasons why on the morning of the first day of their absence
- Where possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours or not in term time
- Do not book holidays or take children out of school during term time
- Notify school as soon as problems arise with your child's attendance
- Encourage children to report any bullying immediately to school staff

Form tutors and teachers

- Be good role models for students
- Give attendance and punctuality to lessons a high priority
 - Praise students for arriving on time
 - Share concerns with Heads of Year/Year Managers immediately if you suspect a pattern of absence, truancy and/or lateness to lessons
- Complete the register promptly and accurately

School Attendance Officer

- Keep accurate records of responses from parents/carers when their child is absent. Amend the electronic register accordingly
- Make contact with parent/carer if no contact has been received in the morning of the first day of a child's absence (by text or telephone call)
- Authorise or unauthorise the child's absence according to school's Attendance Policy and Procedures
- Prepare weekly data to scrutinise and monitor levels of absence, especially students whose attendance has already been identified as a concern

Heads of Year/Year Managers

- Help celebrate good attendance and punctuality in assemblies, with individual students and with groups of students
- Monitor students with poor attendance and punctuality and action the appropriate intervention and support strategy
- Contact Social Services immediately upon the first day of absence of any child who has a Child Protection Plan or is a Looked After Child (Child in Care)
- Refer to the MAST any student (Year 7 to 11 only) who has been absent for 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) without explanation
- Refer to the school's attendance leadership team any student whose absence is 15% or above and is therefore a cause for concern
- Work with other agencies, parents/carers and staff in school to support students with their health, wellbeing and progress in learning

Senior Leadership Team

- Support and developed the roles and responsibilities as outlined previously
- Work on strategic plans and actions, including reviewing school policies and procedures that are required to bring about improvements in student attendance

Governors

- Support staff in school in high level intervention strategies, namely school attendance panels and prosecution panels
- Act as the school's critical friend and challenge the appropriateness and effectiveness of Attendance Policy and Procedures

3.6 Promoting and celebrating regular attendance

Attendance achievement posters – Whole school attendance (weekly and year-to-date) will be calculated at least fortnightly and compared to the School's attendance target. This will be published to all staff and students via the school's attendance notice board and posters in all form rooms.

School reports home – Year-to-date individual student attendance records will be attached to all academic reports that go out to parents/carers three times a year. In addition, the form tutor will make reference to attendance in their comment on the annual full report.

Excellent and Outstanding Attendance Awards – Attendance certificates will be presented to all students with excellent attendance (> 95%) and outstanding attendance (100%) three times a year.

3.7 Interventions and legal sanctions

Interviews with students and letters of cause for concern – as a first step, the school attendance officer along with other staff (Heads of Year/Year Manager/ SLT) will meet with students whose attendance is a cause for concern (usually absence is greater than 15% and without known medical reasons). An attendance target for the student to achieve over the next 6 weeks will be agreed and subsequently monitored. Parents/carers will be sent a letter outlining the concerns over absence and the target agreed.

School Attendance Panel – after a student interview and letter of concern has been sent, if the previously agreed attendance target has not been achieved, then the parents/carers and student will be invited to a more formal school attendance panel which will include a representation of the governors. Another attendance target will be set and monitored over another period of six weeks. At this stage, a referral to MAST will be made (if not already done so previously) and the letter inviting the parents/carers and student to the attendance panel will state that school will no longer authorise any further absence unless additional medical evidence is provided (e.g. doctor's appointment card or photocopy of a pharmacy prescription – a doctor's note is not required).

Final warning before prosecution letter/panel – If following a school attendance panel, a student's attendance has still not significantly improved then prior to a Penalty Notice (fine) being issued to the parents/carers, or a decision to take the parents/carers to court, a final warning letter will be issued and a meeting with parents/carers convened if appropriate. The final warning letter will state that the child must have no Unauthorised Absence during a 15 school day period in order to avoid further action and that any absences as a result of illness must be supported by medical evidence.

Prosecution – The local authority may prosecute parents/carers whose children do not attend school regularly. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 per parent, a community order or, in extreme cases, a jail sentence of up to 3 months. Successful prosecution will result in parents/carers getting a criminal record. If the court thinks it will stop a child from missing school, then it will impose a Parenting Order.

Penalty Notice – As an alternative to prosecution, authorised local authority staff, police officers and headteachers can issue penalty notices to parents/carers of children who are not attending school regularly. The fine is £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid then the parents/carers will be prosecuted.

Parenting Order – A Parenting Order is a court order which requires the parents/carers to attend parenting education or support classes. Parents will also have to do whatever the court believes is necessary to improve the behaviour and attendance of their child at school.

3.8 Support available for students and their families

A range of support is available in and outside school to support students and their families to achieve good attendance.

They include:

- Heads of Year/Year Managers – a role in school dedicated to supporting the safety, wellbeing and progress of students in school
- Multi-sensory room – a dedicated space in school for Learning Support Assistants to work with students on emotional and behavioural difficulties including providing a “quiet space” for when students are coming to terms with bereavement or family breakdown
- Adjusted curriculum – in addition to the normal personalised curriculum offered to all students (e.g. setting, curriculum pathways and options choices), some students may be offered an adjusted timetable to help support a return to good attendance
- School Health – referral to the School Nurse who runs a weekly drop-in service as well as scheduled appointments or referral to the school paediatrician (school doctor) who will work with students and their families alongside their regular family GP
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) – referral to CAMHS has to be through either school health or the family’s own GP
- Home tuition – when supported by CAMHS, Sheffield Local Authority will provide an entitlement to education at home or at off-school-site location. Home tuition is only available for a limited period of time and a transition plan will be drawn up with the view of returning the child to school. Home tuition is also normally conditional on continued engagement with CAMHS.