

## Attendance

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## **1 Policy Statement**

Ewell Castle is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **2 Why Regular Attendance is Important**

### **2.1 Learning**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **2.2 Safeguarding**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-Bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## **3 Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will publish real time attendance information on the Parent Portal.

## **4 The Law**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

The school is required to report to the Local Authority periods of unauthorised absence of more than nine days, irregular attendance and deletion of pupils from the school register.

Specific rules apply to pupils who are educated in the United Kingdom on a Tier 4 Visa. The school is required to notify the UKVI (United Kingdom Visas and Immigration) if any such pupil is absent from school for ten consecutive sessions (i.e. five consecutive days). Absence from school may result in the Tier 4 Visa being revoked.

## **5 Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school will be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, in writing.

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

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend School. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents or guardians are expected to initiate an honest conversation, and to seek advice and assistance from the School.

## **6 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a "persistent absentee" when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

If persistent absence is due to an illness or other similar issue, then it is important to discuss support with the Head of Preparatory (Prep) School or Head of Senior School as appropriate.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and the School will, on a case-by-case basis, support families where absence affects attainment.

## 7 Absence Procedures

If a pupil is absent a parent or guardian must:

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone, email, or online *Parent Portal*, and advise the reason for the absence as well as the expected time/date of return

If a pupil is absent, the School will:

- telephone on the first day of absence if notification from home has not been received
- invite a parent or guardian to discuss in person the situation with the pupil's Head of Year or a member of SLT, if absences are persistent

## 8 Contact Details

It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to ensure that pupil contact information is up to date; two emergency contact numbers are also required.

## 9 Lateness

Punctuality is the School's reasonable expectation of all pupils.

### How We Manage Lateness

We expect pupils to arrive at least five minutes before the start of the School day in order to be registered promptly.

Registers are marked:

- by 8.30 am in the Senior School
- by 8.30 am at the Preparatory School incl EYFS

Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not present before that time.

In the Senior School, if a pupil arrives late without good reason, they will be sanctioned with a breaktime detention on the same day; if they are very late (i.e. after 08:55) this will be escalated to a one-hour Friday Detention. If a pupil has a persistent late record parents or guardians will be asked to meet with their Head of Year to resolve the problem, but they can approach the School at any time if there are problems getting to school on time.

In the Prep School including EYFS if a pupil arrives late parents must accompany them and the School Reception team will register. If pupils arrive late twice or more within a given week and no parents or guardians have explained, then the Form Teacher will bring this to the attention of the Head or Deputy Head who will then ask the School Office to make contact and determine the reasons why.

## **10 Authorised Leave During Term-time**

### **Unauthorised Holidays during term-time**

Taking holidays during term-time will affect a pupil's schooling as much as any other absence.

There is no statutory entitlement to go on holiday during term-time, and such leave will not be authorised.

### **Requests for Authorised Leave during term-time:**

In responding to a request for authorised absence, the School will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. It is important that parents understand the circumstances when authorised leave during term time may be granted:

- Family bereavement
- Religious observance

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised, and may be reported to the Local Authority.

## **11 Review and Development**

### **11.1 Procedure**

This document, together with the effectiveness of it, is reviewed annually by the Executive Leadership

Team and Governing Board and as events or legislation change requires.

### **11.2 Links with other Documents**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Safeguarding Policy  
Uncollected & Missing Child Policy  
Children Missing in Education Policy  
SEND Policy  
Anti-Bullying Policy