



ATTENDANCE POLICY

DANE COURT GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND KING ETHELBERT SCHOOL

Signed by: _____ **Date:** _____

Signed by: _____ **Date:** _____

Agreed: **January 2020**

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Contents

1. Philosophy	2
2. Aims	2
3. Legislation and guidance	2
4. Attendance monitoring	3
5. School Procedures	3
6. Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
7. Strategies for promoting attendance	6
8. Roles and responsibilities	6

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1. Philosophy

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential. We believe that there is a direct link between attendance and performance and that regular school attendance is the key to enabling our students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults. It is our aim that all students should have excellent attendance and we strive to achieve this with our Attendance Officer and Year Leaders/ Heads of Year working together, providing the data and contacting the parents with information about their child's attendance.

We understand that there are many reasons why students may miss school and we will work with students and their families to find a variety of solutions to the problem of absenteeism.

We are aware that parents have a vital role in students' attendance; maintaining a positive and communicative relationship with parents is essential in promoting high levels of attendance.

We acknowledge the importance of reward systems, careful monitoring and effective sanctions. We also acknowledge that it is our responsibility to make our curriculum interesting and relevant to our students.

2. Aims

- 1) To encourage students to attain excellent attendance and reduce absence including persistent absence.
- 2) To ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- 3) To maintain accurate attendance data with all absence followed up.
- 4) Act early to address any patterns of absence.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. Attendance is monitored during every lesson throughout the school day to ensure registers are accurate and to check for truancy of lessons.

4.1a Dane Court Grammar School Staged approach for managing poor attendance

96% - Attendance will be monitored closely by the Attendance Officer and discussed with Year Leaders.

90-95% - School interventions, i.e. mentor to speak to the students and/or parents to address absence, letters to parents regarding absence levels.

Below 90% - Contact parents to address continuous absence. Request medical evidence where appropriate. Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences the school will consult with the KCC School Liaison Officer and may make a referral to the KCC inclusions and Attendance Service.

4.1b King Ethelbert School Staged approach for managing poor attendance

96% - Attendance will be monitored closely by the Attendance Officer and discussed with Heads of Year.

90-95% - School interventions, i.e. tutor to speak to the students and then parents to address absence, letters to parents regarding absence levels. Heads of year and attendance officer intervention as follow up as needed.

Below 90% - Contact parents to address continuous absence. Request medical evidence where appropriate. Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences the school will consult with the KCC School Liaison Officer and may make a referral to the KCC inclusions and Attendance Service.

5. School Procedures

5.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

At Dane Court Grammar School students must arrive at school by 8:40am on each school day. At King Ethelbert School students must arrive by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am (Dane Court) and 8:55am (King Ethelbert School) and will be kept open until 09:00am after which all lateness will be marked as unauthorised.

At Dane Court the register for the second session will be taken at 14:20pm (13.15pm during examination periods) and will be kept open until 14:40pm (13:35pm during examination periods).

At King Ethelbert the register for the session will be taken at 13:20pm and will be kept open until 13:40pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible.

At Dane Court to notify the school of an unplanned absence parents should call the main school number, 01843 864941 and press 1 to report a student absent by leaving a voicemail message with the name, form and reason for absence. Parents should notify the school on every day of an absence even if the child was unwell the day before and continues to be unwell the following day. If the school has not been notified on any subsequent days' absence this will result in a text message to parents to follow up the absence.

At King Ethelbert to notify the school of an unplanned absence parents should call the main school number, 01843 831999 and press 1 to report a student absent by leaving a voicemail message with the name, form and reason for absence. Alternatively, the parents can alert the school via the use of the myEd app with the same information as above. Parents should notify the school on every day of an absence even if the child was unwell the day before and continues to be unwell the following day. If the school has not been notified on any subsequent days' absence this will result in a text message to parents to follow up the absence.

For the first five days of absence due to illness absences will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. After 5 days absence medical evidence will be requested unless the student's attendance is below 90% when medical evidence will be requested after two school days absence. Accepted forms of medical evidence would include a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance. The discretion of the attendance officer and Year Leader will be used in individual circumstances.

5.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Details should be written in a letter/email or by phone call for the attention of the attendance officer.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The discretion of the attendance officer and Year Leader will be used in individual circumstances.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

We believe that punctuality is vital for students to maximise their potential. It is the responsibility of both parents and students to ensure that students arrive in good time and are focussed and ready for their learning. Regular lateness can have a significant impact and can result in a large amount of missed learning.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, which results in a present mark for the session.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised late, which results in an absent mark for the session.

On arrival after the close of the register, students must immediately report to the main school office to sign in and give a reason for their absence. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation can be provided; for example, a medical appointment. Authorised lateness will be decided by the attendance officer in conjunction with the Year Leader.

At Dane Court the names of all late students will be sent to the Year Leader who will discuss any necessary sanctions with the student.

At King Ethelbert the names of all late students will be sent to the Head of Year who will discuss any necessary sanctions with the student.

5.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We will send text messages to all parents where an absence has not been explained. If we do not receive an explanation a further follow up text or call will be sent later that day and the attendance officer will continue to follow up any unexplained absence until we have a satisfactory explanation.

All unexplained absences with no contact from parent/guardian are reported to the Safeguarding team and Assistant Headteacher in charge of Attendance for the student's safety.

5.6 Reporting to parents

Student attendance will be reported to parents in conjunction with students' progress checks/reports.

Parents can request to see a copy of their child's registration certificate (school attendance analysis) at any point during the school year.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Some examples of exceptional circumstance are below:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Or where the school has evidence that there are other pressing personal issues for a family that would warrant a short break from school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the discretion of the senior leadership team.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in section 5.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

The Senior Leadership Team will not authorise any absence requests for holidays during school term time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances. All absences except medical and dental appointments must be requested using an **Application for leave of absence form** (see appendix 2) and handed in to the school office. Parents will be notified in advance, using the return slip, whether this absence will be authorised.

6.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can submit a request for parents to be given a penalty notice fine for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age **and when all other avenues of support have been exhausted**. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Dane Court

House System:

- The importance of good attendance pervades conversations throughout the year with Mentors and Year Leaders.
- Assemblies.
- Praise those with high attendance.
- School highlights the negative impact of poor attendance at parent meetings and during assemblies.
- Pastoral support team supports students with particular needs to ensure that they are happy at school.
- The school makes reasonable adjustments to provision to support the individual needs of students and families

King Ethelbert School

Year System:

- The importance of good attendance pervades conversations throughout the year with form tutors and Heads of Year.
- Assemblies.
- Praise those with high attendance.
- School highlights the negative impact of poor attendance at parent meetings and during assemblies.
- Pastoral support team supports students with particular needs to ensure that they are happy at school.
- The school makes reasonable adjustments to provision to support the individual needs of students and families

8. Roles and responsibilities

Governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Attendance officer

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to Heads of House/Heads of Year and SLT with regular attendance meetings
- Works with KCC Schools Liaison Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Indicates to HOH/HOY where meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues may be appropriate.
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Year Leader (Dane Court)/ Heads of Year (King Ethelbert School)

- The Year Leader has regular meetings with the Attendance Officer to discuss attendance data for their House/Year group.
- Communicate with form mentors the expectations of attendance within their House.
- Review attendance of the year group on a weekly basis, and sanctions appropriate.
- Monitoring individual student attendance issues to check if interventions are required to help put support in place.

Form Mentors (Dane Court) or Form Tutors (King Ethelbert School)

- Will speak to students/parents regarding attendance and lateness.
- Liaise with the Year Leader regarding students in their mentor/tutor group.
- Inform Year Leader or Attendance Officer of any concerns

Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance accurately in every lesson and submitting this information in a timely manner to the school office.
- Recording notes within the register for lateness etc.
- Informing reception or attendance officer of any missing students or attendance concerns.

Office staff

- Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and pass messages to the attendance officer.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Dane Court Application for leave of absence form

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Re: Application for leave of absence

We all know that good attendance at school is a major factor in determining achievement. If your son/daughter is not in school then they cannot benefit from the education we offer. We therefore authorise absence only in exceptional circumstances. For example, close family bereavement or children of service personnel. From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Education (student regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the regulations only allow Headteachers to authorise absence (leave) in “exceptional circumstances”.

Please detach slip and return to the school

Dane Court Grammar School – Application for leave of absence from school

The parent or guardian should complete this form and return it to the Head of Year **4 weeks** before the proposed period of absence.

I wish my child _____ Form _____

To be absent from _____ to _____

I have read and acknowledged the above information.

Reason for absence: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

School Use Only

Approved/Not Approved by Headteacher _____ Date _____

Tear off and return to student/parents _____

Dane Court Grammar School

Dear _____

Thank you for your application for a leave of absence. The absence of _____
For the following dates _____ has/has not but authorised.

Yours sincerely
Attendance Officer

King Ethelbert School Application for leave of absence form

Canterbury Road, Birchington, Kent CT7 9BL

Tel: 01843 831999 Fax: 01843 831015

Email: mail@kingethelbert.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Vicky Willis

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REQUESTING LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Government guidelines to schools state that leave of absence should only be granted in the *most exceptional of circumstances* only. King Ethelbert School will be following these guidelines and, therefore, on most occasions, will not authorise any requests for holidays during term time. Whilst we understand that holidays are cheaper during term time, parents/carers are, by law, responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and the school will only authorise holidays in exceptional circumstances. Parents can face a penalty notice of £60 (which rises to £120 if unpaid within 28 days and can lead to prosecution after that) for taking unauthorised holiday leave for their child. Research shows that less than 40% of secondary pupils with an average of 17 days or more absence, will get 5 good GCSEs at 9-4, compared to more than 90% of those with less than 8 days absence. *It really does matter.*

We thank you for your support in emphasising the importance to your child of good attendance in school. http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/school_attendance_behaviour/absence_from_school/holidays_during_term_time.aspx

Any pupil who is taken out of school by parents during term time will have their absence recorded as an unauthorised unless approved by the school.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The parent or guardian is requested to complete this form and forward it at the earliest opportunity prior to the proposed period of absence, to the headteacher via Pupil Services.

I wish my child _____

Tutor Group _____

to be absent from school

from _____ to _____

for the following exceptional circumstance. (Please see over for further details). Please attach a letter with details, if necessary.

Date: _____

Signature of parent or guardian

Please note: A maximum of two weeks' leave of absence may be granted in any academic year for exceptional circumstances only

Each request will be individually reviewed and a letter of response will be posted as soon as possible, normally within a week.