

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Etone College**



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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Children cannot learn if they do not attend school – attendance to school is a prerequisite to learning and achievement.

School attendance has always been important as without it, even with the best efforts of teachers and schools, we cannot replace the original learning experience. Regular attendance gives pupils the opportunity to take full advantage of all educational and developmental opportunities.

When a child has irregular attendance, this can undermine the educational process, routines and wellbeing and puts them at an educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and, in some cases, can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

We take attendance and punctuality seriously at Etone College and have invested time and energy into creating procedures as efficient and effective as possible. We urge you as parents/carers to give this matter the priority it deserves. By choosing Etone College, we will give your child the best possible education and regular attendance is an absolute requirement.

Etone College expects children to have 100% attendance.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

### **The aims and objectives of this policy:**

- To develop attitudes and behaviour that enable pupils to take an active and responsible role in the adult world;
- To recognise the importance of attendance to the overall achievement of pupils in school;
- To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and good time keeping with pupils and parents/carers and to reward good attendance;
- To monitor and organise procedures to encourage good attendance and apply strategies to minimise absenteeism;
- Promote an effective partnership with the Warwickshire Attendance Service

## **STATUTORY ROLE**

Schools are responsible for recording pupils' attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

## PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND/OR DAY TO DAY CARE

The Education Act 1996 section 7 defines the duty of parents/carers to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

*(7) The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:*

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

The Education Act 1996 section 576 defines the meaning of “parent”.

*In this Act, unless the context of otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person- who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or who has care of him, except that in section 499(8) it only includes such a person if he is an individual.*

## LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITY

If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001, there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at schools, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend can be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, section 444 1A (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). 5.2 Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers in relation to issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. Penalty notices must be issued in a manner which conforms to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all relevant Equal Opportunities Legislation. To this aim, each Local Authority has a Code of Conduct in relation to issuing Penalty Notices.

The School subscribes to the Warwickshire Attendance Service. This service offers support to schools, families and young people in attendance matters.

## SCHOOL DAY PUNCTUALITY

Pupils in all year groups must be in school for 8.45am ready for registration at 8.50am. The school gates are locked at this time and pupils must enter via the late gate where they will be recorded as being late by our attendance co-ordinators. Heavy traffic is not accepted as a reasonable excuse. A pupil who arrives after 9.30am without a valid reason will be recorded as ‘U’ on the register (unauthorised lateness).

Several steps will be taken to address lateness:-

- The pupil’s name is recorded on a late gate spreadsheet.
- The pupil will receive a 20 minute same day detention.
- A text message is sent to parents/carers to notify them that their child was late and the sanction applied.

- If pupils fail to attend the detention, they will receive a 30 minute detention the following day.

All pupils are expected to be on site for 8.45am.

Registration (AM session registration)	8.50am-9.10am
Period 1	9.10am-10.10am
Period 2	10.10am-11.10am
Break	11.10am-11.30am
Period 3	11.30am-12.30pm
Period 4	12.30pm-2.00pm (pupils will have a half an hour lunch sitting in this period)
Period 5 (PM session registration)	2.00pm-3.00pm

**From time to time, it may be necessary to make amendments to the timings of the school day e.g. drop down days / end of term. We will write to parents/carers in advance.**

## **REPORTING ABSENCE/FIRST DAY CONTACT**

If your child is too unwell to come to school, you should contact the school as early as possible (before 9.30am) on the first day of absence and then supply a signed note on their return confirming the illness and days absent.

If no reason for the child's absence has been received by 9.30am, a text will be sent to the parents/carers of pupils who are absent.

Parents are requested to keep the school informed and also supply a short when the child returns to school. If we do not receive any information, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The school or school nurse can supply you with a list of the illnesses that require time off from school and the approximate length of time your child is likely to need off. Once your child has recovered, it is important that they return to school as soon as possible to ensure they do not miss too much teaching – even if this means returning to school on the last day of the week or term.

Parents/Carers should be mindful that taking their child out of school unnecessarily can affect their day to day learning and should therefore:

- Avoid taking their child out of school during term time and certainly when tests or examinations are taking place;
- Phone or provide a note if their child arrives after 9.30am;
- Make medical appointments before or after the school day.

If a child is absent from school for 3 days or more, then the school may ask for medical evidence from parents/carers to validate absence.

## **AUTHORISING ABSENCE**

Only Headteachers and/or designated members of staff have the authority to authorise or un-authorise absences. The School will code all absences in line with the Department for Education School Attendance Coding Guidance.

There are two types of absence:

- authorised - where the School approves pupil absence;
- un-authorised - where the School will not approve the absence.

Authorised absences are those which the school deem to be acceptable, such as genuine illness, attendance at an interview, religious observance or other legitimate off-site events and these are coded accordingly in the school's attendance records and for monitoring purposes.

An unauthorised absence is when a pupil is absent without prior authorisation from the school and/or when no justifiable reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer.

## **MEDICAL NOTES AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The school fully supports pupils' welfare and medical conditions. If your child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, the Head of House can arrange for an interview with the school nurse to discuss what additional support can be offered to help your child access school.

If your child's attendance falls to a level that is likely to adversely affect their long term educational success, the Head of House will arrange to discuss this with you personally and may ask you to supply medical evidence for any future absences. This will enable us to provide suitable care in school and support our coding process.

Pupils with medical conditions should attend school as per normal and we shall try to meet their needs (depending on need / resource), however we cannot simply accept parental information without the correct medical evidence.

We ask that parents/carers making medical appointments for their child, book them early or late in the day, so pupils can be in school for at least half the day.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### FORM TUTORS/SUBJECT TEACHERS:

- Report to the Head of House if any pupil is giving cause for concern or there are patterns of authorised or unauthorised absence;
- Ensure that all registers are completed on time in accordance with school procedures and statutory requirements.

### HEADS OF HOUSE/HOUSE PAS

- Monitor registers on a regular basis to check for trends in absence and punctuality;
- Monitor absence notes/reasons for absence
- Liaise with Leadership and other agencies;
- Ensure that all staff are following procedures on completing registers and refer any concerns/problems to the Head of House or designated member of leadership;
- Sign in and record pupils who arrive late;
- Provide first day contact to absent pupils where appropriate;
- Address telephone messages when pupils are absent from school and inform Heads of House;
- Record reasons for absence into the SIMS system. Intervene and support pupils in improving their attendance in a staged approach through supportive meetings and other strategies.
- Will keep intervention records for pupils whose attendance falls below 95%;
- Will liaise with House PAs to send letters to parents/carers informing them when their child's attendance falls below 95%;
- Organise meetings with parents/carers for pupils whose attendance falls below 92%;
- May refer to the Warwickshire Attendance Service where attendance falls below 90%. Will ensure accurate records are kept of pupil punctuality and refer any concerns to Leadership.

### SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Consider applications for leave of absence from school and communicate with parents/carers;
- Collate attendance data at the end of each term and the end of the academic year, or as required, and set annual attendance targets;
- Develop and update strategies to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality;
- Monitor and analyse attendance, providing whole school data for internal and external use;
- Ensure that parents/carers are informed about attendance and the procedures and criteria for authorising absence;
- Inform the Governing Body about rates of attendance, making them aware of the strategies used to maintain and improve attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all registers are kept for a period of 3 years;
- Attendance meetings bi weekly with Heads of House and Warwickshire Attendance Caseworker to discuss pupil concerns;
- Include attendance figures in progress reports to parents/carers;

- Chair an Attendance/Punctuality Panel Meeting with pupils, parents/carers, Heads of House and Warwickshire Attendance Officer where necessary;
- Celebrate the success of pupils with excellent and improved attendance.

## **SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS FOR MANAGING PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90%. All pupils whose attendance has fallen to this level or are at risk of reaching this level will be closely monitored through the school's tracking procedure, and regular contact made with their parents/carers. Parents/carers will be given opportunities to work closely with school in improving their child's attendance. Pupils will have their absence recorded as unauthorised if their attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence) unless medical documentation is received.

The Head of House will regularly analyse pupil absence and look for patterns of absence and take swift action where there is an attendance concern. Parents of pupils who have a series of medical notes and phone calls for medical reasons will be asked to provide medical evidence. We shall write to parents to outline evidence that could be deemed justifiable to authorise and support the absence. If a parent of a pupil does not provide medical evidence then we shall unauthorise the absence.

Pupils whose percentage of attendance falls below 95% will be reviewed by the House PA and Head of House. If appropriate, we may track attendance or set an internal school attendance target. If there is a failure to make an acceptable improvement during the target period or there is an immediate concern then alternative interventions will be considered.

If difficulties relating to absenteeism cannot be resolved through intervention at school level, then the school may refer the student to the Warwickshire Attendance Service for casework intervention or a pre-legal meeting, inviting parents/carers/pupil to discuss their attendance issues. A formal attendance target may then be set. Failure to achieve this target may result in some cases leading to penalty notices/prosecution.

## **PUPIL SUPPORT FOR LONG TERM ABSENCE**

There are of course, good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, lessons missed cannot be repeated and "catching up" on work is never as good as the original learning experience.

The School recognises the need to support pupils during and after long term absence of any kind and will:

- Provide work for pupils to complete off-site where medical evidence by a GP or Consultant is received advising the pupil is too ill to attend school (where appropriate).
- Consider all strategies in partnership with Warwickshire Attendance Service and other agencies to encourage the return of pupils to the school. This may include negotiated timetables and/or gradual re-integration.
- Ensure that there is a positive atmosphere within tutor groups and lessons in which pupils are welcomed back to the School.
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in re-entry programmes.

## REWARDING ATTENDANCE

Throughout the year, Etone College will develop and implement strategies to recognise and encourage good and excellent attendance.

## REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence: The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Headteachers **shall** not grant any Leave of Absence during term time **unless they** consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parent/carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional** circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warranting the granting of leave.
- Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct (copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits. All absences are authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.**

## SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE

The raising of the participation of young people in education, employment or training from September 2016 has meant that all young people in England must continue in education or training until their eighteenth birthday. The school will therefore monitor attendance for pupils in the following way:

Pupils in Sixth Form register in the morning from 8.50am to 9.10am.

Our intervention stages are as follows:-

- 95-97% attendance – Form Tutor, regular meetings and goal setting to achieve 97% and above
- 92-95% attendance – Stage 1 letter is issued and a discussion with Head of House is held.
- 90-92% attendance – Stage 2 letter is issued and a discussion with Sixth Form Lead is held.
- 90% and below – Sixth Form Lead meeting with parents/carers and contract signed with a warning to state that further absence without valid reason will result in loss of place at College.

## DELETIONS FROM REGISTER

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- i. The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- ii. The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- iii. The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- iv. Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- v. Death of a pupil
- vi. Transfer between schools
- vii. Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- viii. Failure to return from a leave of absence after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- ix. A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- x. In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- xi. 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the school and local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- xii. Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

Etone College will follow Warwickshire County Council Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TARGET**

Etone College expects pupils' attendance to be 100% and does not set a Persistent Absence (PA) target.

In September 2015 the DfE increased the PA levels from 85% to 90%. The methodology used to calculate PA pupils has also been altered. In previous years a pupil would not be identified as a PA until they had amassed a set number of absences (e.g. 57 sessions in 2014/15). In September 2015 the threshold has been removed and a pupil is identified as PA once they miss 10% of their own individual sessions, this will mean all pupils below 90% will be PA.

The Ofsted Framework now requires pupils within the bottom 10% attendance to be monitored and for schools to be aware of the reasons for their absence.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Achievement against school's attendance targets will be reported upon to the Governing Body. The Assistant Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and where necessary make recommendations to the Governing Body for improvement.

The school will keep accurate records on file for a minimum period of three years.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES**

The Attendance policy should be read in conjunction with:

- i. Guidance on admissions
- ii. Equality Statement
- iii. Guidance for staff on the registration of pupils
- iv. Keeping Children Safe in Education (otherwise known as safeguarding)
- v. The Behaviour Policy