

3rd March 2026



Etone College
www.etonecollege.co.uk

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance and Religious Observance

I am writing to remind you of the procedures and expectations regarding attendance at Etone College, to inform you about our arrangements for religious observance leave, and to share important national information about the direct link between attendance and GCSE success.

Reporting Absence

This is a reminder that all student absences must be reported to the House Office on the day of absence via:

- The Matrix Academy Trust app
- Telephone call to the House office of your child

If an absence is due to illness or a medical appointment, medical evidence should be provided as soon as possible to ensure the absence can be authorised.

Good attendance is essential for your child's progress, wellbeing and academic success. Regular attendance helps students:

- Keep up with learning
- Build positive routines
- Maintain strong relationships with teachers and peers

Missing school can have a significant impact on both achievement and confidence. Thank you for your continued support in helping us promote good attendance. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the House Office.

Religious Observance Leave

As part of our commitment to supporting the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds within our school community, we recognise that pupils may wish to observe significant religious festivals during the academic year.

In accordance with national attendance guidance, the school may authorise **one day** of absence per academic year for religious observation, provided that parents/carers inform the school in advance using the usual reporting channels.

Please note:

- Authorised leave will only be granted for **one day per academic year** for religious observation.
- Any additional days taken for religious or cultural reasons will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- It is essential that parents/carers contact the school prior to the intended absence to ensure correct authorisation.
- Should you require clarification on what constitutes authorised leave, please contact your child's House Office.



How we are supporting children during periods of religious observance

- **Fasting & Prayer:** Fasting is a personal matter, and no prior registration with the school is required should your child choose to participate. For students wishing to pray, supervised spaces are available at lunch time in the Sports Centre
- **Free School Meals (FSM):** Fasting students eligible for FSM can still use their entitlement to purchase food and drink which they can take home with them to be consumed at an appropriate time
- **Exams & Well-being:** We are mindful that some pupils are currently sitting mock exams during this period. We encourage a balance between religious commitments and studies; please contact your child's House if you have specific concerns regarding their well-being at this time.

National Evidence: Attendance and GCSE Success

A recent report from the Department for Education, "The link between attendance and attainment in an assessment year" (March 2025), presents clear national evidence showing how strongly attendance is linked to GCSE outcomes.

The evidence is irrefutable: better attendance is directly linked to higher GCSE performance, particularly in achieving Grade 5 or above in both English and Maths. Key findings include:

- Pupils with **95–100% attendance** were **1.9 times more likely** to achieve Grade 5+ in English and Maths than those with 90–95% attendance.
- Even relatively small drops in attendance (from 95–100% down to **90–95%**) can nearly **halve the chances** of passing both core subjects.
- Students with **80–85%** attendance were **3.4 times less likely** to achieve the Grade 5 benchmark compared to those in the top attendance band.
- Students with **less than 50%** attendance were nearly **10 times less likely** to achieve Grade 5+ in English and Maths.

The report also found that **moving up just one attendance band** (approximately 10–20 additional school days across the year) can increase the likelihood of achieving expected grades by up to 10%.

What This Means for Your Child

Attendance matters — every single day.

- **95%** attendance = up to **9.5 days** missed
- **90%** attendance = around **19 days** missed (almost 4 weeks)
- **85%** attendance = over **28 days** missed (about 6 weeks)
- **Below 80%** = missing the equivalent of a **full school term or more**

Excellent attendance habits are vital throughout school to ensure that pupils and students do not miss out and have no gaps in their learning.

How We Can Work Together

- Please ensure your child attends school every day unless genuinely unwell. Children should still attend school with mild illnesses such as a common cough and cold.
- Avoid booking holidays or routine appointments during term time.
- If your child is struggling to attend, contact us as early as possible so that we can offer appropriate support.



We greatly appreciate your continued cooperation in maintaining excellent attendance and ensuring that all pupils benefit fully from their education.

Yours faithfully



Mr I Smith
Headteacher



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Matrix
Academy Trust
EDUCATION WITHOUT EXCEPTION

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