



# **Attendance Policy 2021- 2022**

**Kings College Guildford  
“An uncompromising commitment to excellence”**



## Introduction

At Kings we are committed to the education and welfare of our students. We firmly believe that all students benefit from regular school attendance. To this end, we will work with parents/carers to ensure that the students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on with the co-operation of parents and the additional support, where necessary, of the Local Authority Inclusion Service.

Regular school attendance is central to students achieving their full potential. Their attendance and punctuality record throughout secondary school will be included in references required by colleges and prospective employers.

In this policy statement we set out how Kings will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full –time education to which they are entitled.
- Take action to address patterns of absence.
- Whole school targets for the academic year 2021-22 are:

Attendance 96% (this equates to no more than eight days or sixteen sessions of absence)

Punctuality - less than 1% late marks.

## Student responsibilities

We expect that all students will:

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school on time.
- Sign in at main reception if they miss tutor registration for any reason.
- Attend school in full uniform and equipped for the day.
- Discuss promptly with their tutor/Attendance Officer any issues that deter them from attending school.
- Sign out at Reception before leaving the school site to attend an appointment and sign back in when they return.

## Parent responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 Part 1 Section 7 states:

*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.*

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Perform their legal responsibility to ensure that students of compulsory school age attend school every day that they can.
- Ensure that the student in their care arrives at school on time and fully prepared for the school day.
- Advise the school of absence by 8:30am, this can be done via the Studybugs app or by telephone, leave a message on the absence line and send a note to the tutor on the first day that a student returns to school.
- Inform the Attendance Officer promptly when any issue arises that may keep a student away from school.
- Support the efforts made and measures taken by the school and the Local Authority Inclusion Service to help students back into school if attendance becomes a problem.

## Senior leadership team responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## Attendance officer responsibilities

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the senior leader responsible for attendance
- Works with the allocated Surrey Inclusion Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## Staff responsibilities

### **We expect that all staff at Kings will:**

- Create a culture of good attendance and promote the benefits to all students.
- Provide a welcoming and safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all students, in tutor time and lessons, by taking the register on SIMS during each tutor session and at the start of each lesson.

### **We expect that, as tutors, all staff will:**

- Monitor the attendance of their tutees to tutor time and lessons.
- Ensure that a note is received from parents on the first day that a student returns to school after any period of absence and contact home if this is not the case.
- Inform Pastoral Lead when a student is failing to attend tutor time with no reason for absence.
- Provide pastoral support to address attendance issues and alert Attendance Officer if notes from parents are not forthcoming and contact with home has not been made when students return to school after a period of absence.
- Investigate reasons for absence where there has been no response to truancy call.

### **We expect that, as classroom teachers, all staff will:**

- Inform Reception if a student who has registered in school has not arrived at their lesson and no information of their whereabouts has been provided.
- Make contact with parents if they are concerned about a student's absence from school because of the amount of curriculum being missed.
- Always check that a student has signed in at main reception, if a student arrives late to the lesson and says that they have just arrived in school.

Attendance will be reviewed each cycle and actions agreed to be taken to support those with less than 96% attendance.

## Registration and Punctuality

Morning registration is taken at 8.30am – 8.50am. Registers will remain open until 9am. Students arriving after 9am will be coded as a 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration is taken at 1.10pm.

If a student arrives late to school, they will:

- Sign in at reception and give reasons for the late arrival. The Attendance Officer will update the register by marking them late. Students who are late complete a 15 minute detention at lunchbreak.
- Late marks and sanctions given are tracked by the Attendance Officer.
- Persisted lateness will result in the following sanctions:
  - Three times in a module, 30 minutes after school detention for each subsequent late arrival. A letter will be sent home.
  - Five times in a module, 60 minutes after school detention for each subsequent late arrival. A letter will be sent home and a meeting arranged with parents, student and the Attendance Lead.

## Absence

Parents are required to inform the school of their child's absence, by either:

- Register the absence using the Studybugs app <https://studybugs.com/about/parents>

OR

- Telephone and leave a message on the absence line: 01483 484802

Absence must be reported for each day your child is off school.

Parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

For appointments during the school day students must sign out at Reception on leaving school and sign back in at Reception on their return. Evidence of the appointment should be obtained and presented to Reception.

Students are not allowed to leave the school site without permission.

Parents are requested to contact the attendance officer or tutor with the reason for any planned absence, the time they need to leave and if/when they are expecting to get back to school.

Absence will only be authorised in rare cases of illness and medical appointments, or other situations which have been discussed with and approved by the school.

In the case of more than five days absence due to illness or medical conditions, verification from a GP or other relevant body may be requested before the absence is authorised.

If a student's parent/ carer requires a student to miss school for any period of time, they will:

- For absences of two sessions or less (i.e. one school day), contact the tutor.

- For absences of more than two or more sessions (i.e. one or more school days), obtain a leave of absence application form from Reception or download a copy from the school website and request leave for specific dates recorded on the form.

## **Holidays and Exceptional Leave of Absence**

In line with the national guidelines, it is school policy not to authorise any absence for holiday taken in term time. Parents should be aware that the Principal is unable to authorise absence for holiday in term time except in exceptional circumstances.

School term dates, external exam dates and inset days are published on the school website a year in advance.

Parents should book their family holidays during school holidays; no parents/carers can expect leave of absence for their child/children to be authorised as a right.

The school will always be sensitive to unforeseen events and decisions will be made at the Principal's discretion.

Any unauthorised absence will be recorded as such on your child's attendance record. If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as such and the Local Authority will be notified. Parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. The fine is currently £120 reduced to £60 if paid promptly.

If a student fails to attend a public examination for which they have been entered by the school without good reason, parents will be liable to reimburse the full cost of each exam entry to the school.

When a student is granted leave of absence from school, he/she will:

- Inform all of his/her teachers the dates of the absence.
- Be responsible for finding out what needs to be done while away from school.
- Ensure that any missed work is caught up with on return to school.

Failure of students to return from leave on the agreed date may result in them losing their school place and having to re-apply for admission to the school. Their place cannot be guaranteed.

## **Unexplained Absence**

On each occasion a student is absent from school without explanation, an automated message will be sent to all parent contacts.

Parent responses will be recorded in the attendance system. If no response is received, the absence will be followed up by the class tutor. If the class tutor has been unable to obtain a

reasonable explanation for the absence within the next fortnight, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.

For absences to be authorised, a medical note will be required.

## Encouraging and Recognising Good Attendance

Central to enabling each student to achieve their potential is good attendance. Kings works hard to provide a caring and welcoming environment and to encourage good attendance.

To this end the school will:

- Respond promptly to a student or parent/carer concern about school that may be impacting on his/her attendance.
- Promote the benefits of good attendance in assembly. Recognise individuals and tutor group attendance in celebration assemblies (See Behaviour for Learning Policy)
- Maintain intervention strategies to provide additional support for students with poor or irregular attendance in years 7 – 11.

**Weekly attendance rewards: The tutor group with the highest attendance will be recognised each week. The top 3 tutor groups for attendance and punctuality will earn places on the School Monopoly Game.**

**Modular attendance rewards: Students will receive attendance stickers each module to recognise their attendance %.**

**Termly attendance rewards: Students with 100% attendance will be awarded with attendance badges and all students with good attendance will be celebrated via assemblies.**

## Attendance Tracking and Support

The school reviews attendance on a daily basis and follows up on poor or irregular attendance or punctuality.

The senior leader in charge of attendance meets with the Attendance Officer each cycle to discuss attendance concerns and share and record information. All students with less than 96% attendance are reviewed. Where there is no valid reason for low attendance the following process and sanctions are put in place:

- After two separate absences a general information letter is sent to parents explaining the Local Authority thresholds for attendance and the school attendance processes.
- If a student has been absent on three separate occasions, another letter is sent to parents to advise them that future absences will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is received. Parents are also required to attend a meeting with the pastoral lead, tutor or attendance officer to ascertain support needed for the student.



- If there is still no improvement the student will be referred to the Surrey Inclusion Officer when it is felt by the school that the student and family would benefit from additional help to improve attendance. Parents will be invited into school for an attendance support meeting in which an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified. Parents may be required to sign a School Attendance Agreement.

The school Attendance Officer will then work intensively with the student and parents to improve their attendance.

If the student fails to sustain regular full – time attendance or the parents fail to engage with the school, King’s Principal will refer parents/carers to the Local Authority. The Local Authority may issue a penalty notice or summons parents/carers to appear before the Magistrates Court for failing to ensure their child’s regular school attendance under Section 444 of the education Act 1996. This could result in parents being fined up to £2,500 if convicted and/or 3 months in prison.

## Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Team, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child’s unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- Parents/carers who are failing to secure their child’s regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer.
- When a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without authorisation, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child**. A warning will not be given where parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if they persist in taking the holiday.
- Students identified by police and Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice.
- Where a student’s attendance has fallen below the Local Authority threshold (currently 90%) and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding six weeks. Unauthorised absence includes late arrival after the close of registration without good reason, for which a U code is marked on the register.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days.

For Penalty notices relating to exclusions, if the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

For Penalty Notices relating to other circumstances set out above, if the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Moving to another school**

If parents/carers decide to send the children in their care to a different school, they will:

- Inform the school in writing as soon as possible.
- Obtain a date for entry to the new school (students must attend Kings up to this date).
- Provide the address of the new school. Provide their new home address if they are moving.

If the school receives notice that a student is leaving the school, staff will:

- Request names and addresses connected to the move
- Make contact with the new school
- Forward the student's school records to the new school.

In the event that the school does not receive information about the move or confirmation from the new school, Kings School will refer the family to the Pupil Tracking Officer and to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service.

### Kings College Attendance Process

