



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

1. This policy is a 'Whole School Policy' and informs practice in the Senior School, Prep School and Nursery. We expect all pupils to attend every day (or when registered in the Nursery) when the school is in session so long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage pupils to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.
2. We see education as a partnership between the family and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for your child, and we look to you to support this objective. We recognise that parents / guardians have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly during compulsory school years and will work in partnership with parents to ensure attendance. We expect pupils to be punctual in attending school and in attending lessons and poor punctuality will be followed up. We will make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
3. Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Attendance records are kept for a minimum of 3 years. Further information about the Attendance Register is at Annex A.
4. **Authorised absence.** An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parents writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a pupil out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
5. **Unauthorised absence.** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of **both** the school and a parent. This means an absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### ABSENT PUPILS

6. When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the teacher will record the absence in the register or on ISAMS and inform the school office which will endeavour to contact a parent. When the pupil is absent, the parent should contact the school by email or telephone before 8.30 am on the first day of absence. Parents should contact the school prior to the day of absence if the absence is planned (eg dental appointment).
7. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the teacher will take immediate action to notify the school office which will contact the parent in order to make sure the child has not suffered an accident.

## **REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

8. We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. Requests for absence must be made in writing and reach the school at least 14 days in advance (except in an emergency, when parents are asked to telephone the school before 8.30 am. Requests for exceptional absence (eg absence for days other than Religious Festivals, medical or dental appointments or for illness) should be sent to the Headmaster or the Prep Head at least two weeks in advance.

9. We always send parents the term dates over a year in advance in order that you can arrange your holidays without disrupting your child's education. Please note that it is school policy usually not to allow holiday to be taken during term.

## **LONG TERM ABSENCE**

10. When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 days, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the pupil to be given some tuition outside school.

## **REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

11. The school will contact the parent or guardian of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LEA support services who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents understand the seriousness of the situation. The school reserves the right to consider taking action against any parents who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. Pupils with a history of absence may not be entered for GCSE and A level exams.

## **SENIOR SCHOOL DAY PUPILS**

12. All pupils are required to be in school before 8.25 a.m. Most lessons finish at 4.10 pm when tea and toast is available followed by extra curricular activities or prep under the supervision of a member of staff. Day pupils are normally expected to leave by 6.00 pm but if they leave before this time, they must sign out from the Abbots Hall.

13. Key Stage 3 pupils are not permitted to leave the school site unless accompanied by a member of staff for trips or a sporting fixture. Key Stage 3 pupils are accompanied to and from Martlet House for lessons. Key Stage 4 pupils are permitted to travel to and from Martlet House in pairs or small groups and are also allowed town leave between 4.10 pm and 4.45 pm providing they sign out/in in the Abbots Hall. Key Stage 5 pupils are allowed greater freedom during the day but are required to sign out / in at all times.

14. We recognise that poor attendance may have a negative impact on a pupil's progress. Every three days missed by a pupil represents approximately 5% of their contact time in school that term. Procedures have been put in place to monitor progress as follows:

- A pupil who has been absent for 3 days in any one term will have a discussion with their tutor as to how they can catch up.
- A pupil who has been absent for 5 days or more in any one term will complete a formal plan on how to catch up work missed with their tutor.
- The Head of Key Stage will discuss absence with parents when a pupil has been absent for 10 days or more in any one term.

Older pupils sometimes request study leave during the summer exams. This is a missed opportunity to make the most of the expertise on offer within the school and we therefore expect pupils to attend for

revision lessons in school throughout the examination period in the summer. Permission to be absent from lessons is by exception and must be agreed in advance with the Head.

### **SENIOR SCHOOL BOARDING PUPILS**

15. All boarding pupils are cared for by a House Master and a team consisting of Matrons and House Parents. Together, they will be responsible for boarders during term, including ensuring that he or she is safely occupied outside normal school hours. We expect boarders to live with you or his/her guardian when he/she is away from school on exeats and half term during term time. Parents must provide written permission for a boarder to stay with another family during exeats or half terms. Please telephone the school if he/she is taken ill during an exeat. He/she should bring a letter signed by a parent on his/her return to school giving a reason for the absence. We will always telephone the home if your son/daughter is late in returning from an exeat. Boarders have town leave after the school day has finished and at weekends and are required to sign out and back in again. Times are specified by the House Parents and will be changeable.

### **PREP SCHOOL PUPILS**

16. Arrangements for the registration of Prep School pupils are contained in the 'Care and Supervision of Pupils Policy'.

### **NURSERY PUPILS**

17. Arrangements for the registration of Nursery pupils are contained in the 'Care and Supervision of EYFS Pupils Policy'.

**ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

1. The Senior School maintains Attendance Registrars electronically on ISAMS. The Prep School maintains manual registers. The Nursery maintains manual records using print outs from 'Childs' Play'.
2. The attendance register must be completed at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. It must show whether the pupil is:
  - present;
  - absent;
  - attending an approved educational activity outside school (approved by the Head and supervised by a person approved by the Head, and including work experience or sporting activity);
  - unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of school site or part of it; unavailability of transport provided by school, where the home is not within walking distance);
  - taking authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the proprietor or a person acting on the proprietor's behalf; unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause; observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs);
  - taking unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken; the entry may be corrected later when the reason is established).
3. A pupil may be marked in the attendance register as unable to attend because of exceptional circumstances where the school site, or part of it, is closed or where the minibus service is unavailable. The keeping of attendance data is essential for the care of the pupils' academic progress and for reporting on it. It is also a welfare matter for the school to know when pupils are or are not on the premises. Flexibility is reasonable for the timing and method of registration for post-16 year old pupils, particularly those on limited programmes of study, but whatever system is used should be rigorously implemented.
4. Entries must be in ink and any amendments must show the original and amended entries, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name of the person making the amendment. The ISAMS register counts as being in ink and must be backed up in the form of an electronic, micro-fiche not less than once a month. For example, each month's permanent electronic copy might be stored on a CD or flash drive/USB device. Each of these additional copies of the attendance register must be retained for three years after the end of the school year in question, as must registers hand-written in ink.
5. The school has a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to East Sussex County Council: ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence), failure to attend regularly, and deletion from the school register when the next school is not known.