



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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I. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Eton College is dedicated to providing an educational experience of the highest quality for all its pupils and endeavours to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome to attend. For pupils to benefit fully from the opportunities presented to them and to make excellent progress both socially and academically, 100% attendance is expected throughout the year.
- 1.2 Pupils' high attainment, confidence with peers and future aspirations all depend upon good attendance, therefore the aim of this policy is to provide clear, consistent and compliant attendance procedures that not only promote good attendance but can identify patterns of non-attendance and address situations where pupils go missing from education.
- 1.3 For clarification, in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulations (2014) and DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*, only *day* pupils of compulsory school age are statutorily required to have their attendance recorded in the Attendance Register at the start of each morning and afternoon session. As a boarding school we take a register at breakfast and we take a register (via positive registration) in every school that is taught along with other compulsory absences throughout the day (see 7.2).
- 1.4 The College is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, particularly with regards to Safeguarding and to pupils with disabilities or Special Educational Needs, further details of which can be found within our Equality and Inclusion Policy.
- 1.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with other College policies, namely, the Behaviour Policy, the Supervision Policy, The Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy, the Admission and Attendance Statement and the Missing Pupil Policy, all of which are available within the Parent Portal or as hard copy documents upon request.
- 1.6 This policy will be reviewed annually or as legislation change requires.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 DEPUTY HEAD (BOARDING)

- 7.6 2.1.1 The Deputy Head (Boarding) acts as the school's Senior Attendance Champion (see [Working together to improve school attendance](#)) and oversees, directs and coordinates the attendance procedures at Eton and ensures that this policy is consistently applied throughout the College. The Deputy Head (Boarding) is responsible for ensuring that attendance is accurately recorded and any issues analysed and patterns of non-attendance investigated. The decision whether to authorise an absence from the College under exceptional circumstances rests with the Deputy Head (Boarding) (see section 5.3).
The Deputy Head (Boarding) monitors the Positive Registration returns and liaises with House Masters and Dames about houses with low attendance figures.

2.2 HOUSE MASTERS

- 2.2.1 House Masters regularly monitor the attendance of the pupils within their House to look for any patterns of non-attendance that could highlight issues or areas of concern. Both House Masters and Dames are alerted immediately if a pupil in their House is absent from a lesson in order that the pupil can be located or the Missing Pupil Protocol can be implemented if

necessary. Parents and pupils are required to approach the House Master to obtain permission for absences from the House, such as medical appointments or B Weekends.

2.3 MASTERS

- 2.3.1 It is the responsibility of each Master to record pupil attendance within their division immediately via the Positive Registration programme within the School Administration System (SAS). House Masters and Dames will be notified automatically of any absences in order that the matter can be investigated and the Missing Pupil Protocol implemented if required. If a pupil is absent from a tutorial without authorisation, the Tutor will alert the House Master or Dame immediately via email.

2.4 PUPILS

- 2.4.1 Pupils are expected to attend all lessons and co-curricular activities when they are fit and well to do so. Pupils are expected to notify a Master personally and in good time, if they will be absent from a school after seeking their House Master's permission. Persistent tardiness or non-attendance will be sanctioned through the Tardy Book or the Bill.

2.5 PARENTS

- 2.5.1 Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%, therefore, it is requested that parents share the College's ethos in supporting and promoting excellent attendance by encouraging their children to attend both punctually and regularly and to not request absences during term time. Parents should avoid taking their child out of Eton for non-urgent medical or dental appointments and only request a leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance (see section 5.3).

3. LEAVE PROCEDURES

3.1 EXPECTATIONS DURING THE HALF

- 3.1.1 Pupils are expected to be punctual for all organised activities and to maintain a 100% attendance rate. Pupils who are late will be penalised through Tardy Book unless they have a written note from a Master or an email has been sent on their behalf excusing their tardiness or absence.
- 3.1.2 Under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (formerly the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006), a leave of absence may only be granted by the College in exceptional circumstances. Absences will not normally be authorised for reasons such as birthdays, day trips, etc. If parents wish their child to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, elective surgery etc., an application should be made in writing to the relevant parties (see section 4 below).

3.2 DATES OF EACH HALF

- 3.2.1 The dates of each half are published at least two halves in advance within Fixtures and at least one year in advance on the Parent Portal and the College website. Any unavoidable changes will be notified to parents immediately.

3.3 TRAVEL TO AND FROM ETON

- 3.3.1 Pupils may travel to and from Eton unaccompanied with their parents' permission. The supervision and safety of pupils travelling to and from Eton is the responsibility of parents. Pupils must always meet their College and House commitments before starting Leave and must return in time for their evening commitments.

3.4 LONG LEAVE/SHORT LEAVE

- 3.4.1 Sponsored students studying at the College on a Child Student Visa must complete a Travel Arrangements Form (on Firefly) detailing their destination address and contact details during any Leave or overnight absence from Eton. This should be submitted (where possible) two weeks in advance of departure to ensure the absence is authorised. The Admissions Department will send a reminder to the relevant pupils via email (copying in their House Master) prior to school holidays.

3.5 SCOTTISH LEAVE

- 3.5.1 Pupils who have a journey time home of more than three hours, may, at their House Master's discretion, leave on the Thursday evening at the beginning of any Short Leave period. A request for 'Scottish' Leave must be made in writing by parents, to House Masters, well in advance of departure. Scottish Leave does not apply prior to Long Leave or at the end of a Half.

3.6 SUNDAY LEAVE

- 3.6.1 Pupils may not leave Eton without their House Master's knowledge and approval. Pupils who have been granted leave to go out on Sunday with parents must note that such leave expires at 19:30 for DEF and at 21:00 for Specialists on A and C Sundays and 18:15 for all pupils on B Sundays.

3.7 WEEKEND LEAVE

- 3.7.1 All pupils may take all weekends that include a B Sunday as leave. Leave may be withheld, at the discretion of the House Master, if the academic or disciplinary record of the pupil concerned is not satisfactory. The leave begins after school commitments on Saturday and ends on Sunday at 18:15 Absence.
- 3.7.2 Specialists may also take leave on weekends that include an A or C Sunday. This leave begins after school or House commitments on Saturday and ends on Sunday at 22:00. B Block pupils may take two such weekends and pupils in C may take one per half.
- 3.7.3 Weekend leave is only granted on the strict understanding that it will be spent under the supervision of parents or parents' nominees.

3.8 STUDY LEAVE

- 3.8.1 All pupils must be back in Eton at the latest on the evening before an examination.
- 3.8.2 House Masters may use their discretion in granting leave to members of B Block after Long Leave when gaps in their examination programme appear, provided that parents are fully aware of the arrangements in place and that all other commitments, especially Taking Leave, are honoured.
- 3.8.3 Pupils in B block are expected to be in Eton for Leavers' Sunday.

4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- 4.1 All absence requests should initially be made by parents to the House Master, in writing (an email request is sufficient) who will respond within 24 hours with a decision. Arrangements should not be made until an affirmative decision has been received. The House Master can grant approval for absences due to illness or for medical reasons, for compassionate leave or for religious observances. The House Master will arrange for schoolwork to be sent home if required. Leave may be withheld, or absence requests declined, at the discretion of the House Master, if the academic or disciplinary record of the pupil concerned is not satisfactory.

- 4.2 For a significant absence (i.e. half a day or more or for an absence not already approved by the House Master) a request must be made in writing to the Deputy Head (Boarding) at least three weeks in advance of the intended departure date. The Deputy Head (Boarding) in consultation with the pupil's House Master, the Deputy Head (Academic) and/or the Deputy Head (Co-Curricular) will make the decision as to whether the circumstances of the event meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances' (see section 5.3).

5. AUTHORISED ABSENCES

5.1 MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- 5.1.1 Routine dental, optometry or other specialist treatment should be carried out in the holidays where possible. It is acknowledged that from time to time a pupil may need to visit a specialist in London or elsewhere, and that certain courses of treatment, orthodontic for instance, entail regular visits. If such a visit is essential during the Half, we ask that it should be arranged so that no schoolwork or other school commitment is missed. In all cases, the House Master should be consulted before an appointment is made.
- 5.1.2 Pupils attending an appointment with the School Doctors or with consultants at the Stephenson Centre for Wellbeing may be absent from classes if strictly necessary. The Dame will update the School Administration System to indicate an authorised absence to prevent the Missing Pupil Protocol being instigated unnecessarily. It is, however, recommended that pupils book appointments around their class commitments.

5.2 MUSIC LESSONS

- 5.2.1 After a pupil organises a music lesson, the division Master whose schools they will miss will receive an email from the Music Schools informing them of which pupils will be missing from their schools. Masters must allow pupils to leave their schools. If a music lesson has been scheduled incorrectly, however, the division Master should contact the pupil's House Master.
- 5.2.2 If a pupil misses a music lesson for an unknown or unsatisfactory reason, the House Master will receive an Absence report by email.

5.3 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 5.3.1 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (formerly the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) state that schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are described as, 'rare, significant, or unavoidable', and that, 'the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time'. There are no specific rules on what constitutes 'exceptional' as circumstances vary from school to school and from family to family. At Eton, permission is granted solely at the discretion of the Deputy Head (Boarding).
- 5.3.2 There is no legal entitlement for time off during a Half to go on holiday and in the majority of cases absence requests for a vacation will not be authorised. Parents still wishing to apply for a leave of absence must write to the Deputy Head (Boarding), at least three weeks in advance, and before making any travel arrangements. Taking holidays in term time will affect a pupil's schooling as much as any other absence and it is expected that parents will support the College by not taking their sons out during the half.

6. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

- 6.1 If leave is taken during the half without prior permission from the College, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and attached to the pupil's permanent record. Three unauthorised absences will result in a warning letter from the Deputy Head (Boarding) and their parents

may be required to attend a meeting to discuss the reasons behind their child's poor attendance.

- 6.2 International pupils who are sponsored by the College on a Child Student Visa risk losing their visa through regular non-attendance. 10 consecutive, unauthorised absences will result in the UK Visas and Immigration Service being notified by the Admissions Department via the UKVI Sponsor Management system and the pupil's visa being withdrawn.
- 6.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify the Local Authority if a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, without permission, continuously for a period of 10 days. This, however, only applies if the College does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- 6.4 Where there is concern for a child's welfare, the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer this to the local authority children's social care immediately.

7. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

- 7.1 In accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulations (2014) only day pupils of compulsory school age are statutorily required to have their attendance recorded in the Attendance Register at the start of each morning and afternoon session. As Eton is a full boarding school (where automatic attendance is assumed) it records absences periodically throughout the day instead.
- 7.2 Official absences are recorded at the following times;
- Breakfast* [or after Brunch on a B Sunday*]
 - At the start of each school (class)
 - Lunch*
 - 6.15pm Absence [Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun]*
 - Dinner*
 - Bedtime* (the House Team member on duty must ensure that all boys are accounted for before going off duty)

Those with asterisks refer to compulsory House absences to be taken on Orah [see 7.5 below]

Absences may also be taken in Houses during Quiet Hour on Mon/Weds/Fri and during Prayers.

- 7.3 A Master should complete a return via Positive Registration on SAS. If a pupil is absent from a school without an explanation, the report is automatically sent to School Office and the pupil's House Master and Dame so that the absence can be investigated and the Missing Pupil Policy initiated if required. If a pupil is absent from the house then the House Master or Dame will immediately investigate, and update the electronic record if necessary.
- 7.4 The Dame, at the start of each day (and throughout the day if required), will note, via SAS, if a pupil has an authorised absence, such as a music lesson, an appointment at the Health Centre, etc., in order that the Missing Pupil Protocol is not instigated unnecessarily.
- 7.5 Absences in a House are taken on the Orah app by the adult(s) on duty or by a House officer (if supervised by the adult on duty). Those with an asterisk in 7.2 above are compulsory and must be completed and saved on Orah. Absences may be taken manually provided that they are then promptly transferred to Orah. In the event of disruption to the Wi-Fi connection a manual copy can be made and kept on file for up to 3 years (the same amount of time absence data is held on SAS and Orah).

- 7.7 The keeping of absence data is essential for the care of pupils' academic progress and for the reporting on it. It is also a welfare matter for the College to know when pupils are not on the premises or regularly avoiding certain activities, therefore absence data is monitored daily by House Masters. The attendance monitoring process is also supported by the Deputy Head (Boarding) who creates periodic reports to identify patterns or trends in attendance across the school.
- 7.8 If issues are discovered, the College works collaboratively with pupils, parents and local partners (where necessary) to resolve them. This is done by discussing with pupils and parents any barriers to attendance and putting measures in place to encourage and improve attendance.
- 7.9 The Deputy Head (Pastoral) monitors the Positive Registration returns and liaises with House Masters and Dames about pupils with low attendance figures.
- 7.10 The Deputy Head (Curriculum) liaises with Heads of Department about any Masters in their departments whose completion rate of Positive Registration is unsatisfactory.