



# Missing Student and Attendance Policy

**This policy applies to:**

All pupils

**Person responsible for the policy:**

Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-curricular)

**Review dates:**

Last review: Sept 2025

Next review: Sept 2026

The College expects full attendance and attendance will be monitored. A student missing from education is a very serious situation which might need further referral. This procedure is to be followed if a student is absent without leave:

### **Absent from Lessons, Activity or any registration period**

If a student is absent from a lesson or activity without explanation, the member of staff involved must check the reason **promptly**. Pupils must be registered on ISAMS in every lesson and on SOCS for all games sessions and EP activities. If a student does not appear as absent in the ISAMS register be sure to consult the music lesson schedule and LAMDA schedule (found on Teams) before sending a Register Alert. Once the School Office has received a Register Alert the response to absence procedure will be initiated. If a pupil is absent from games or an EP activity they should be marked as an unauthorised absence on SOCS and the relevant HoMM should be informed ASAP.

Callover is taken in House at 08:20 and lunchtime every day. All students are required to attend without excuse. Students who fail to attend Callover without a valid excuse will be given a Friday Conduct detention.

If a student is missing from an activity or from the College without authorisation, he or she will be required to explain their absence. Missing a lesson, or sports fixture will automatically result in a Friday detention. Missing other activities may result in a lower level sanction but this will depend on the circumstances. All students are expected to attend Open Day as required, unless representing the College in some other capacity e.g. sports fixture.

### **Response to Absence:**

1. School Office to contact relevant Head of School, HoMM, House staff and Health and Wellbeing Centre if no response to the Register Alert has yet been received;
2. School Office to send All Staff Email;
3. School Office to phone/email parents;
4. Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-curricular) to contact police if search is unsuccessful.

### **Absent from Evening Callover**

Boarders will have other Callovers in the evening. If a student is not present for a Callover and the absence cannot be satisfactorily explained, staff taking that Callover must inform the HoMM/Assistant in charge of the house at the time. This is very important, particularly at bedtime, and must be stressed to all who take Callovers.

### **Response to Absence:**

1. Check Signing Out list and inform HoMM;
2. Initiate search to include speaking to friends, phoning students, Medical Centre, search grounds, inform Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-curricular);
3. HoMM or Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-curricular) to contact parents;
4. Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-curricular) to contact police if search is unsuccessful.

### **Response to boarders missing at night:**

1. HoMM/AHoMM to raise the alarm and commence a search for student.
2. Checking with friends of missing student, if they are aware of location.
3. Checking doors, alarms and CCTV to ascertain if student has left the boarding house.
4. Parents and Police called if student is unable to be found within a short period of time.
5. Alarm raised to staff and security on site.
6. Senior staff to lead search until police arrive on site.

### **Absent on a trip**

If a student goes missing on any outing from the College a member of staff should complete the emergency procedures agreed for the trip which may include a search depending on the situation. If the search proves unsuccessful then the lead member of staff should contact the HoMM and the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-curricular). The designated contact or member of SMT will contact the Police (0845 607 0999); the HoMM will contact Parents. A school trip in the holidays will have a separate agreed procedure.

### **Student not collected**

If a day student is not collected by the stated time they should be directed to the designated areas, Senior School students should be taken to the Library to be supervised there until collection. If the student is still not collected before the Library closes then contact should be made with a boarding HoMM who will take care of the student in their House, contact the parent to confirm collection time and await the arrival of the parent. Pre Prep and Prep students should be taken to the Lower School boarding house and the member of House staff on duty informed. The member of House staff will contact the parents to confirm collection time and await the arrival of the parent.

If a boarder is not collected at the time expected, contact will be made with the parents of the student and the student remains in the care of the boarding HoMM until such time as he/she has been collected by parents/guardians.

### **Search Questions**

Useful questions to be asked in the case of a missing student:

- When were they last seen?
- Who were they with?
- Where might they have gone?
- Have they signed out?
- Is there a College activity they might be on?
- Are they ill or injured and at the Health Centre?
- What emotional state do they appear to be in?
- Has anything upset them recently?
- Did they speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are their main friends at the College?
- Do they have a mobile phone and what is the number?

### **Support**

A student who has gone missing may have behavioural, psychological or other issues that may need to be addressed. The College will provide the appropriate level of support and may need to refer to local authorities.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following additional College policies:

- **Supervision of Students Policy**
- **Supervision of Students on School Journeys Policy**
- **Behaviour and Conduct Policy**
- **Boarding Handbook**

## Missing student protocol

Staff member is made aware that student is missing

### Phase 1

Senior member of staff to lead search efforts

Check of sign in and sign out book

Staff members to search locality and last known location

School Office to contact relevant Head of School, HoMM, House staff and Health and Wellbeing Centre

Whole school message to be sent, with photo of missing student, to alert all staff

Request sent to SMT for CCTV footage of last known location and direction of travel

Friends of missing student asked to make contact

**If student is not located within five minutes**

### Phase 2

Senior member of staff to continue to coordinate the search efforts

Parents and police to be called, at the same time.

Head teacher and SMT to be informed of Phase 2 being initiated

Site to be closed to all incoming and outgoing traffic, departing vehicles to be checked for missing student.

All available staff to be tasked with locating missing student

Police to lead the search when they arrive on to site

CCTV to be monitored to assist with the search

**It is important to remember , that some high risk, known students will require that you move directly to Phase 2. These students names to be known by senior staff members .**

## Attendance policy

### Objectives

Ardingly College aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence. Our duty of care is to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled, act early to address patterns of absence, support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly (see Appendix Two for advice) and promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### Background

At Ardingly College we believe that for a student to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. Every student has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. We believe in working in partnership with our parents/carers to support good attendance and therefore facilitate success in learning. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents/carers and students play a key part in making our College successful. Parents/carers, students and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

We strive consistently to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%, regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically, regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and peer relationships easier to cope with, regular attenders find learning more satisfying, regular attenders are more successful in transferring between our School and higher education, employment or training.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the students. The procedures regarding attendance in relation to your child are set out in Appendix 1.

### Legislation and guidance

This policy and the procedures in Appendix 1 meet the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refer to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. This document is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy and the procedures in Appendix 1 also refer to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **Deputy Head (Pastoral & Co-Curricular) responsible for:**

- Oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and punctuality
- Ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school
- Work collaboratively with other staff to ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality, and where this is not the case, that timely interventions are put in place
- Report on Attendance matters for the Head to report to the Local Governing Body at termly intervals.
- Have day to day oversight of all attendance matters
- Actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- Work with students and their families who are at risk of becoming persistently absent or late
- Ensure that records of attendance are complete and accurate
- Take responsibility for preparing case files and other paperwork for attendance interventions such as Penalty Notices and referrals to the County's Attendance Litigation Panel

### **HoMM and/or Class Tutor (or equivalent) to:**

- Accurately record attendance for all students using the relevant codes (See Appendix 3)
- Review at regular intervals the attendance and punctuality of students under their care
- Intervene early with students who show signs of regular absence, lateness or truancy
- Regularly praise/reward students with excellent attendance
- Work collaboratively with the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-Curricular), to improve school attendance

### **Students to:**

- Maintain high levels of attendance at school
- Be rarely late to school or lessons
- Attend scheduled public examinations

### **Parents/Carers:**

- Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

## **Understanding types of absence**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

**Authorised absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised

**Unauthorised absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request.

This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings, family holidays
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers.

**An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence that they have been on holiday.**

### Notification of absence

Parents are requested to complete an absence form on the portal, or email HoMM's or telephone the school office on the first day of absence with an indication of the length of the absence and expected date of return. If no message has been received, office staff will attempt to make contact with the parent, by telephone and e-mail.

### Request for leave of absence.

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. It is important to note that Head Teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.

There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to email Nicola Burns ([nicola.burns@ardingly.com](mailto:nicola.burns@ardingly.com)) for Senior school students and Laura Lamont ([laura.lamont@ardingly.com](mailto:laura.lamont@ardingly.com)) for Farm House and School House students.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds, parents/carers may be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

### Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

## Appendix:

### Appendix One: Absence and Procedures

#### Lateness

Late is defined a student arriving late to AM registration and student lates are recorded daily. Parents can expect the HoMM or Form Tutor to communicate with either a phone call or letter to discuss reasons for lateness and look at steps to ensure students are on time every day.

#### Student truancy

A letter home or phone call regarding the absence, followed up by a school sanction. The HoMM and/or Form Tutor, supported by the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral and Wellbeing) or Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-Curricular), will deal with any escalation of the problem. If the situation fails to improve after the above procedures have been carried out, further action will be taken in conjunction with the LA.

#### Persistent Absence

Students who have a rate of attendance consistently below **90%** are a cause for concern and their circumstances will be investigated further. Whilst we recognise that there may be genuine reasons for absence, that student's attendance will be closely monitored on a half termly basis and parents may be notified of the concern. Students who are consistently below **90%** attendance are characterised as "persistently absent" and are a significant concern as their academic progress is significantly compromised. It is worth noting that an attendance rate of 90%, maintained throughout school, equates to a student being effectively absent for half a year of his/her secondary schooling.

#### Monitoring

In Senior School HoMMs monitor attendance on a daily basis and raises any patterns of concern as appropriate with the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-Curricular), in Farm House and School House Form tutors monitor attendance on a daily basis and raise patterns of concern with Assistant Head, Pastoral & Wellbeing.

The DSL Team meet regularly to discuss/review the attendance and punctuality policy and how it is being adapted to everyday use. Attendance figures are reviewed weekly, and concerns are recorded on CPOMS.

When a student's attendance or punctuality falls below our expectation, in the first instance HoMMs/form tutor will notify parents/carers of attendance concerns. If there is no satisfactory and sustained improvement, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) for Senior school or Assistant Head Pastoral for Prep School, will write to parents/carers to notify them and invite them to discuss further methods of support. If absences continue after the meeting, the school will no longer authorise absence and if needed the matter will be referred to the Pupil entitlement team for further **intervention**.

A referral will be made if the measures described above fail to bring about an improvement in attendance. This intervention will either be a fixed penalty notice (FPN) or a SAP (School Attendance Panel).

A fixed penalty notice (FPN) warning will be issued if a student has 10 or more **unauthorised** sessions during a rolling 10 week period. A referral for a SAP (school attendance panel) will be made in circumstances where an FPN is not appropriate and for students with 15 or more sessions of

unauthorised absence during the year. Each referral must be accompanied by details of the student's attendance for the preceding period.

County Officers have recourse to a number of legal powers:

**School Attendance Order (SAO):** A School Attendance Order is issued if your child is not on roll at any school and the local authority is worried that you have not made arrangements to provide an alternative, suitable, full-time education. SAOs are used to direct you to send your child to a specified school. Before serving an SAO, Children's Services Officers should make every effort to discuss the situation with you. If it is not possible to persuade you to make suitable arrangements for your child's education, then you will be served with a notice stating that you are failing in your duty to provide your child with an education. The notice must inform you that you need to satisfy the local authority that you are providing an education at school or otherwise within a specified time period (but not less than 15 days beginning with the day the notice was served). Local authorities are responsible for prosecuting parents if they breach an SAO and also have the option of seeking an Education Supervision Order.

**Education Supervision Order (ESO):** As well as or instead of prosecuting you the local authority may apply to a court for an ESO. This order means that a supervisor will be appointed to you to give you help and advice on getting your child back into education. As an alternative to prosecution, authorised local authority staff, police officers and headteachers can issue penalty notices to parents of children who are not attending school regularly. The penalty is £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If you fail to pay a penalty fine, you will be prosecuted.

**Taking you to court:** The local authority may prosecute you (they don't have to issue a penalty notice first) and this could result in a more severe penalty. You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or, in extreme cases, a jail sentence of up to three months. If the court thinks it will help to stop your child missing school, it may also impose a Parenting Order.

**Parenting Order :** A Parenting Order is a court order which requires you to attend parenting education or support classes. You will also have to do whatever the court says is necessary to improve your child's behaviour and attendance at school.

#### **UKVI sponsored students:**

It is expected that sponsored student's attendance **will not** drop below 80% or miss 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence. If any of the above occurs the school/college will assess the reasons behind this and if necessary, the school/college will report this on the SMS as per the sponsor guidance.

## **Appendix Two: Advice for Parents.**

### **What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers, and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from not attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons- difficulties with school work, friendship issues, or family difficulties. It is

important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance and work together to tackle the problem.

### **My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time in the morning. Ensure that you leave home in plenty of time, with all their belongings for the school day, including a water bottle for prep students.

Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education- be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

### **Leavers**

If your child is leaving our school, other than when transferring to another school, parents are asked to give the school comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move, new address and telephone numbers, details of their child's new school and the start date when this is known. A form is available in the school office.

If children leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By providing us with all the above information these investigations can be avoided.

### **Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling**

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the head teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

### **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport**

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the head teacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the head teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Where permission is granted, please get in contact with their tutor/HoMM so that we can work out how best to support them so that their academic progress is not harmed and that coming back in to school is not stressful.

### **Absent students who are attending Ardingly College through a sponsored visa**

We are required to ensure you are engaged with your studies. We will use information about your attendance to monitor this, which will be collected by the college. This will be done on a monthly basis and will include information about your attendance, submission of work, exam attendance, tutorials,

or contact with your tutor or other staff, as well as your engagement with any additional online learning resources. The information we use will usually relate to the standard attendance requirements of your course.

If we have any concerns about your level of engagement with your studies, you will be asked to meet with your HoMM/Class tutor to discuss any problems you may be having. This process is designed to be supportive to you and your studies. We will assist you in obtaining the relevant support as necessary.

If our concerns are not addressed, or you do not meet with us when requested, or you have missed too much to continue your course, there may be implications for your visa status. In certain cases, we may be required by UKVI to withdraw sponsorship of your visa if we cannot satisfy ourselves that you are appropriately engaged with your study.

We are also required to report to UKVI any changes in your circumstances as outlined in the previous section. Some of these changes mean your visa will be curtailed (cancelled). We are required to report within 10 days of the change; we will usually email you 24 hours before making the report.

### **Appendix three: Absence Codes.**

## Blue - Nature of Absence needs to be recorded

## Red - New or replacement codes

Codes	Pupil Attendance Codes
/	Morning session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken
\	Afternoon session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken
B	Attending a place for any other approved educational activity <i>(Where schools use code B, they must also record the nature of the educational activity in the Nature of Absence area)</i>
C	Absent with leave for other circumstances
C1	Absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
C2	Absent with leave, of compulsory school age and temporary reduced timetable does not require them to attend
D	Attending another school at which they are a registered pupil
E	Excluded from the school
G	Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday
I	Unable to attend because of sickness
J1	Absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by LA (under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014) <i>(Where schools use code K, they must also record the nature of the educational activity in the Nature of Absence area)</i>
L	Absent from the school when attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended
M	Absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
N	Absent - circumstances not yet established
O	Absent - other circumstances
P	Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements by LA to facilitate their attendance
R	Day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs
S	Absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Mobile child whose parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and is travelling with that parent
U	Absent for registration - arrived in school after registration closed
V	Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a visit or trip
W	Attending a place for an approved education activity that is work experience
X	Absent with leave, not of compulsory school age and timetable does not require them to attend
Y1	Unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of pupil's home and transport to and from school normally provided is not available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency
Y3	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and pupil cannot be accommodated in parts of the premises that remain in use
Y4	Whole school closed when school was due to meet for a session, but session has been cancelled
Y5	Unable to attend because pupil is subject to a sentence of detention
Y6	Travel to or attendance at school would be contrary/prohibited by guidance/law relating to incidence or transmission of infection or disease
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause <i>(Where schools use code Y7, they must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause in the Nature of Absence area)</i>
Z	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date
#	Planned whole school closure – no session to take place