

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2021/22**

**AIM:** (final result we are aiming to achieve):

Our main aim at The English College is for all students to achieve success. Attendance and punctuality are essential for academic achievement; they enable students to develop a responsible attitude towards their commitments in school and they prepare them for future study and the world of work.

**RATIONALE:** (The reason for which this policy has been written)

This policy has been written to outline the expectations that The English College has with regards to attendance and punctuality. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all students. Our aim is to ensure that pupils arrive at school and to lessons on time. We strive for attendance that is consistently outstanding for all groups of pupils. KHDA grades and defines student attendance as follows:

<b><u>KHDA Definitions</u></b>	<b><u>% Attendance</u></b>	<b><u>Days absent</u></b>
Outstanding	98%	No more than three days
Very Good	96%	No more than seven days
Good	94%	No more than eleven days
Requires Development	92%	No more than fifteen days
Weak	Less than 92%	Fifteen or more days

*NOTE: 'absent' includes both authorised and unauthorised days off school. The only days off school which do not count as an absence are absences of educational value e.g. trips and exams or for study leave.*

**GUIDELINES:** (The principles/instructions/steps of the policy)

All staff will be actively engaged in raising attendance levels. This will involve fostering good relationships between pupils and staff, being aware of the causes of poor attendance and ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and appropriate. We will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents play a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home school links so that we can work together whenever there is concern about attendance.

**NOTE: In accordance with UAE law, a pupil may be permanently excluded if he/she is absent from school for 20 consecutive days, or 25 non-consecutive days, within an academic year. In such cases, the school does reserve the right to exclude a child, ask them to repeat a year or withdraw the offer of a place for the following academic year.**

#### STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

Parents should inform the school of any impending absence or immediate absence (before 7:40 AM on the day in question, or the night before if possible) by email to the address [absence@englishcollege.ac.ae](mailto:absence@englishcollege.ac.ae). A doctor's certificate may be required, which may include a 'fit to return to school' letter depending on the illness. The school nurse will keep a record of these.

All unauthorised absence will be followed up by email or by telephone call from the receptionist. An unauthorised absence is when a student is absent and the school has not been notified. Other circumstances may also be classed as unauthorised absence, regardless of whether the school has been informed, such as an unauthorised holiday. This will be at the discretion of the head of school.

A student will be marked as an authorised absence when:

- The parent has notified the school of the absence and this is deemed by the head of school to be an acceptable reason for absence, such as illness.
- The head of school approves a parent request for additional days off school for exceptional circumstances.

Authorised absences still count as a day of absence. The only exception to this rule is if the student is on an educational trip/event, on study leave or sitting an academic examination.

The Assistant Head for the key stage in Secondary will reward 100% attendance with termly certificates in assembly. Students with 100% attendance for the whole school year are celebrated in our annual awards evening in June for both Primary and Secondary.

Parents can request additional time off school for their child in exceptional circumstances. In order to do this, they must email the Assistant Head for the Key Stage in Secondary or Key Stage Leader in Primary who will then consider each case on an individual basis. Please note the school discourages any absenteeism from school and even if approved, this is still recorded as an absence.

Depending on the reasons for absence, staff will endeavour to assist absentees in catching up with missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members. However, students should take an active role in catching up on work missed.

The Head of School will undertake systematic monitoring of attendance. They will be looking for:

- Unauthorised absence;
- Frequent short absences with possible patterns, e.g. every Thursday absent;

Parents play an active role in maintaining high levels of attendance and will be informed about any concerns that the school has regarding their child's attendance. The following contact will be made when students reach the following thresholds:

- **4 days absence:** as per the KHDA parent contract, if students have 4 absences in a short period of time, such as a month or term, the administrator may email the student and the parent to notify them of the absences.
- **7 days absence:** an administrator notifies the Assistant Head for the key stage or Key Stage Leader in Primary who investigates the reasons for the absences. If appropriate, the Assistant Head asks the administrator to send attendance letter 1 out to the parents to notify them of the absences. The parents should sign and return the slip to acknowledge receipt of letter 1. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Assistant Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.
- **11 days absence:** an administrator notifies the Assistant Head for the key stage or Key Stage Leader in Primary who investigates the reasons for the absence. If appropriate, the Assistant Head for the key stage or Key

Stage Leader in Primary asks the administrator to send attendance letter 2 out to the parents to notify them of absences. The parents should sign and return the slip to acknowledge receipt of letter 2. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Assistant Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.

- **15 days absence:** an administrator notifies the Assistant Head for the key stage or Key Stage Leader in Primary who investigates the reasons for absence. If appropriate, the Assistant Head for the key stage or Key Stage Leader in Primary arranges a meeting with the parents and the Deputy Head of School. During the meeting, they will give attendance letter 3. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 3 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Deputy Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.
- **20 days absence:** an administrator notifies the Assistant Head for the key stage or Key Stage Leader in Primary who investigates the reasons for the absences. If appropriate, the Deputy Head of School will arrange a meeting with the Head of School and the parents. During the meeting, they will give attendance letter 4. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 4 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Head of School will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.
- **25 days absence:** As per KHDA guidelines, students who are absent for 25 days or more may be required to repeat a year or the College may withdraw the offer of a place for the following academic year.

*Please note: the school will endeavour to follow all of these steps, in order, as stated above. However there may be circumstances where this is not possible, such as if absences are accrued quickly; this process may therefore be adapted based on the situation. This will be at the Head of School's discretion.*

Accurate records will be kept of all correspondence and letters. At all stages, attendance certificates should be provided to parents to articulate the specific days missed. *Note: if a parent does not sign and return a letter, the letter still counts as being seen by the parent if the school can demonstrate that it was given to the parent, such as being delivered to their email inbox.*

Students who become sick during a school day will not accrue a day of absence. Students who feel sick will report to the nurse and parents may be called, if warranted.

The English College asks parents to avoid (unless completely unavoidable), taking students out of school before the end of the school day for any reason, including medical appointments. If a student is absent for a school day for a reason which was

deemed to be avoidable by the Assistant Head for the key stage (e.g. a driving lesson), the College will mark that student as having unauthorised absence for the day.

When communicating with parents, The English College shares the same consistent message with parents as to why we track attendance and communicate with home:

### **Why we track attendance carefully**

- Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school (DfE UK, 2020). Students are more likely to succeed in academics when they attend school consistently.
- Consistent attendance shows potential employers that a young person is reliable.

### **Why we communicate with home so regularly**

- To offer support - regular absence might have an underlying cause that needs addressing; medical, wellbeing, safeguarding etc.
- Sometimes parents do not realise how many days their child has had off in total; a study by Attendance Works (not for profit organisation, 2016) found that parents underestimate the total number absences that their children have. 60% of parents said their child was absent an average of 2+ days a month, but did not recognise that their child had missed 10+ days in a year.
- To record in writing our concerns regarding attendance and to make parents aware of the potential consequences of poor attendance.

## SESSION VS. LESSON ATTENDANCE

### **Session Attendance**

**Attendance figures are taken from AM registration.** It is essential that students arrive at school on time for AM registration. This is communicated clearly with parents at the start of the year and followed up at periodic times in the year. If a student misses the whole or part of AM registration, the student will be classed as late. The policy for monitoring lateness to school can be found below in the LATENESS section.

### **Lesson Attendance**

For safeguarding reasons, we also choose to register lesson attendance in the Secondary School. This means that the teacher takes a register every lesson. This doesn't contribute to the student's overall attendance percentage, but does allow all school staff to know where each student is at every lesson time during the day.

## LATENESS

Students must be on the school site by 7:40am in Secondary and by 7:55am in Primary. At 7:40am the Secondary school gates are closed and any student arriving after will be issued a late slip by security and will sign in with the receptionist. The receptionist will issue a negative on Classcharts. Classcharts will then automatically notify parents that the child was late. At 7:55am in Primary, the Primary school gates will be closed and students will go to reception to be escorted to their class. Lateness will be recorded by the Primary School Receptionist.

The Head of School will undertake systematic monitoring of punctuality. They will be looking for:

- Persistent lateness;
- Persistent lateness with possible patterns, e.g. every Thursday late.

Parents play an active role in maintaining high levels of punctuality and will be informed about any concerns that the school has regarding their child's punctuality. The following contact will be made when students reach the following thresholds:

### **Secondary lateness:**

- If a child is late 3 times over a 4 week period, classcharts will issue a detention with the form tutor and will notify the parents, form tutor, and Assistant Head for the key stage.
- If over a short period of time, such as a month or up to the length of a school term, the child is late 5 times, an administrator notifies the Assistant Head for the key stage who investigates the reasons for the lateness. If appropriate, the Assistant Head for the key stage asks the administrator to send punctuality letter 1 out to the parents to notify them. The parents should sign and return the slip to acknowledge receipt of letter 1. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Assistant Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.
- If over a short period of time, such as a month or up to the length of a school term, the child is late a further 3 times (8 times in total) the parent will be invited into school to meet the Assistant Head for the key stage. During the meeting, they will be given punctuality letter 2. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 2 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Assistant Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.
- If punctuality does not improve, either of the following two things could occur:
  - Over the same short period of time, as identified in letter 2 above, the child could accrue further lateness (9 or more periods of lateness), after the first meeting with the Assistant Headteacher and letter 2;
  - The child could improve their punctuality for that term but then accrue 8 more periods of lateness for a second term (*for example the student has 8 periods of lateness in term 1 and then another 8 in term 2*).

At this point, the Assistant Head for the key stage will arrange a meeting with the parents and the Deputy Head of School. During the meeting, they will give punctuality letter 3. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 3 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Deputy Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.

- If punctuality does not improve, either of the following two things could occur:
  - Over the same short period of time, as identified in letter 2 above, the child could accrue further lateness (9 or more periods of lateness), after the second meeting with the Deputy Headteacher and letter 3,
  - The child could improve their punctuality for that term but then accrue 8 more periods of lateness for a third term (*for example the student has 8 periods of lateness in term 1, term 2 and term 3*).

At this point, the Deputy Head will arrange a meeting with the parents and the Head of School. During the meeting, they will give punctuality letter 4. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 4 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Deputy Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.

- If there are significant concerns about punctuality throughout the year, As per KHDA guidelines, the College may withdraw the offer of a place for the following academic year. This will be at the discretion of the Head of School after Punctuality letters 1 and 2 as a minimum have been received by parents.

### **Primary lateness:**

- if a child is late three times in a four week period, a call will be made home by Reception and the Key Stage Leader will be informed.
- If over a short period of time, such as a month or up to the length of a school term, the child is late 5 times, an administrator notifies the Key Stage Leader who investigates the reasons for the lateness. If appropriate, the Key Stage Leader asks the Primary Receptionist to send punctuality letter 1 out to the parents to notify them. The parents should sign and return the slip to acknowledge receipt of letter 1. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Key Stage Leader will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.
- If over a short period of time, such as a month or up to the length of a school term, the child is late a further 3 times (8 times in total) the parent will be invited into school to meet the Key Stage Leader. During the meeting, they will be given punctuality letter 2. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 2 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Key Stage Leader will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.
- If punctuality does not improve, either of the following two things could occur:

- Over the same short period of time, as identified in letter 2, the child could accrue further lateness (9 or more periods of lateness), after the first meeting with the Key Stage Leader and letter 2;
- The child could improve their punctuality for that term but then accrue 8 more periods of lateness for a second term (*for example the student has 8 periods of lateness in term 1 and then another 8 in term 2*).

At this point, the Key Stage Leader will arrange a meeting with the parents and the Deputy Head of School. During the meeting, they will give punctuality letter 3. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 3 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Deputy Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.

- If punctuality does not improve, either of the following two things could occur:
  - Over the same short period of time, as identified in letter 2 above, the child could accrue further lateness (9 or more periods of lateness), after the second meeting with the Deputy Headteacher and letter 3,
  - The child could improve their punctuality for that term but then accrue 8 more periods of lateness for a third term (*for example the student has 8 periods of lateness in term 1, term 2 and term 3*).

At this point, the Deputy Head will arrange a meeting with the parents and the Head of School. During the meeting, they will give punctuality letter 4. The parent should sign to acknowledge letter 4 in the meeting. If a parent refuses to sign and return the letter, the Deputy Head will note this on the copy of the letter kept on file at school. However, refusal to sign does not change the process.

- If there are significant concerns about punctuality throughout the year, As per KHDA guidelines, the College may withdraw the offer of a place for the following academic year. This will be at the discretion of the Head of School after Punctuality letters 1 and 2 as a minimum have been received by parents.

All late students from years 7-13 must arrive through the secondary entrance. All late students from years FS-6 must arrive through the primary entrance and report to Primary Reception.

*Note: if a parent does not sign and return a letter, the letter still counts as being seen by the parent if the school can demonstrate that it was given to the parent, such as being delivered to their email inbox.*

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Heads of School will be responsible for the school's policy and procedures, and may delegate aspects of its day to day implementation and management to a designated member of the school's leadership team.



- All staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied.
- The Heads of School and staff will ensure there is no differential application of the policy and procedures on any grounds, particularly ethnic or national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexuality.
- Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance and punctuality of their child both inside and outside the school.
- The iSAMS School Register is a formal document and should be marked with accuracy at the beginning of the morning registration session. Lesson attendance should also be marked in the first 5 minutes of each lesson. If a register is incomplete it will be followed up by administration via an email.
- The register information is used by school administration staff to contact parents about absence. As stated above, the receptionist should call home based on the morning registers.
- If a teacher has a student missing for a lesson, who was marked present for previous lessons, the teacher should email the receptionist and Assistant Head of School for that year group immediately. This could potentially be a serious child protection issue.
- It is essential therefore that class teachers and tutors ensure that register records are accurate. If there should be a fire in school, an inaccurately marked register could result in a life being lost.

#### SUPPORT FOR PUPILS WITH ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS

- Attendance will be monitored by the Form Tutor, Class Teacher, Assistant Head for the key stage, Deputy Head and Head of School.
- Special programmes may be negotiated with pupils experiencing attendance problems using curriculum support, from Tutors, Class teachers, Inclusion Leader, Assistant Head for the key stage, Key Stage Leaders, Deputy Head and Head of School.
- According to the KHDA rule of 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days within an academic year, The English College will insist on a formal meeting, as per the thresholds above.
- Children with long term illnesses or with mental health concerns, including school phobia and social anxiety, will be supported by the school. Contact with parents and the pupil will be maintained. As far as is possible, work should be sent for the pupil and sent home. The school will work with the family and KHDA to try and assist the student to the best of our ability.
- Assistant Heads for the key stage, the key stage leaders and the Deputy Head and the Head of School will all receive weekly attendance figures from the administrative staff. Poor attendance should be acted on weekly. However, each case is treated with professional judgement. To support this, attendance is a regular agenda item for pastoral meetings.

**APPENDICES** (Relevant links to other policies or documents)

- Attendance letter 1
- Attendance letter 2
- Attendance letter 3
- Attendance letter 4
- Punctuality letter 1
- Punctuality letter 2
- Punctuality letter 3
- Punctuality letter 4

**POLICY REVIEW HISTORY:**

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, approved by the Principal

<b>Historical Record</b>				
Revision No.	Date	Brief Description of Change	Approved by	Next Review:
0	17/3/2021	New Policy	SLT	7/7/2022