



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY AY 2023/24

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:

KHDA Definitions	% Attendance	Days absent
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. 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. If trips are in school at the start of the day all students should go to form to register even if they don't complete the full registration period there, they should be seen by their form tutors/class teachers. Form tutors/class teachers will mark them present and the data manager will have already made them a V for lessons where they are scheduled to be off site. Trip teachers update the registers for late students.

The pastoral team for the key stage will reward 100% attendance with termly certificates in assembly in the Secondary School. Students with 100% attendance for the whole school year are celebrated in our annual awards evening in June.

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 Year Leaders 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 Friday 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:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary will investigate the reasons for the absences. If appropriate, they send attendance letter 1 out to the parents to notify them of the absences. No parent signature is requested on this letter.
- **11 days absence:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary investigates the reasons for the absence. If appropriate, the Head of Year/Year Leader will 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 Head of Year/Year Leader 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:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary investigates the reasons for absence. If appropriate, the Head of Year/Year Leader arranges a meeting with the parents. 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 Head of Year/Year Leader 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:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary investigates the reasons for absence. If appropriate, the Head of Year/Year Leader arranges a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher in Secondary or Deputy Headteacher in Primary, 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 Assistant Headteacher in Secondary or Deputy Headteacher in Primary 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. If appropriate the Head of Year/Year Leader will arrange a meeting with the parents and the Deputy Head of School (Secondary or Primary).
- **Further absence:** The Headteacher will meet with the family to discuss support needed and/or re-enrolment for the following academic year. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

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, 2022). 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 both the Primary and 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.

If a student is absent from a lesson the teacher must check to see if they were in the previous lesson. They can easily do this on iSAMS when a register is taken - if the register window is maximised the teacher can see all of the previous register marks for the day.

MISSING STUDENTS

If they have been marked present earlier in the day and are now not in the lesson the teacher must:

- Primary - email primarystudentmissing@englishcollege.ac.ae.
- Secondary - email secondarystudentmissing@englishcollege.ac.ae.

If the child is truanting it must be logged via the behaviour system (Primary Dojo, Secondary iSAMS Rewards and Conduct).

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 sign in with the receptionist. The receptionist will log the late on iSAMS. Parents can access morning registration attendance and punctuality records via the iSAMS portal. 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 and Primary lateness:

- **4 days late:** as per the KHDA parent contract, if students have 4 lates in a short period of time, such as a month or term, the administrator or class teacher/tutor may email the student and the parent to notify and the tutor may issue a detention.
- **7 days late:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary investigates the reasons for the lates. If appropriate, the Head of year will send punctuality letter 1 out to the parents to notify them of the lates. No parent signature is requested on this letter.
- **11 days late:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary investigates the reasons for the lates. If appropriate, the Head of Year/Year Leader will send punctuality letter 2 out to the parents to notify them of the lates. 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 Head of Year/Year Leader 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 late:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary investigates the reasons for the lates. If appropriate, the Head of Year/Year Leader arranges a meeting with the parents. 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 Head of Year/Year Leader 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 late:** The Head of Year in Secondary/Year Leader in Primary investigates the reasons for lates. If appropriate, the Head of Year/Year Leader arranges a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher in Secondary or Deputy Headteacher in Primary, and the parents. 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 Assistant Headteacher in Secondary or Deputy Headteacher in Primary 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 late or more:** as per KHDA guidelines if there are significant concerns about punctuality throughout the year, the College may withdraw the offer of a place for the following academic year. If appropriate, the Head of Year in Secondary / Year Leader in Primary will arrange a meeting with the parents and the Deputy Head of School (Secondary or Primary).
- **Further lateness:** The Headteacher will meet with the family to discuss support needed and/or re-enrolment for the following academic year. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

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 lates are accrued quickly; this process may therefore be adapted based on the situation. This will be at the Head of School's discretion.

A child could improve their punctuality for that term but then accrue more lates in a second term. The cumulative number of lates and how those lates are calculated as part of the overall punctuality record are at the discretion of the Head of School.

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/ Primary Year Leader 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, Head of Year, Primary Year Leader, 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, Pastoral Lead, Primary Year Leaders, Head of Year, 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 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.
- Heads of Year, Primary Year Leaders, Assistant Heads for the key stage, the Deputy Head and the Head of School will 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 1 - Primary](#)
- [Attendance letter 2](#) / [Attendance letter 2 - Primary](#)
- [Attendance letter 3](#) / [Attendance letter 3 - Primary](#)
- [Attendance letter 4](#) / [Attendance letter 4 - Primary](#)
- [Punctuality letter 1](#) / [Punctuality letter 1 - Primary](#)
- [Punctuality letter 2](#) / [Punctuality letter 2 - Primary](#)
- [Punctuality letter 3](#) / [Punctuality letter 3 - Primary](#)
- [Punctuality letter 4](#) / [Punctuality letter 4 - Primary](#)
- [DfE UK, 2022 Attendance guidelines](#)

POLICY REVIEW HISTORY:

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Whole School Leadership Team.

HISTORICAL RECORD				
Revision No.	Date	Brief Description of Change	Approved by	Next Review:
0	17/3/2021	New Policy	SLT	7/7/22
1	17/03/2022	Changes to start of Day - Primary. Roles and Responsibility updates in regards to Pastoral Leads and Primary Key Stage Leaders.	SLT/PLT	17/03/23
2	17/03/2024	Roles and Responsibility updates in regards to Pastoral Leads and Primary Year Leaders.	WSLT	17/03/24