



Policy Title: Attendance and  
Punctuality Policy

**Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all students have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when students are absent or late.**

*"Teachers in schools which achieve high rates of attendance maintain high expectations by continuing to insist that attendance is both important and obligatory. They are vigilant, and spend time in careful investigation of the causes of each absence, so that their response fits the circumstances".*

*"The fact that the students know their absence will be noted and there will be prompt follow up is in itself a sufficient deterrent for many."*

Education Observed No.13 "Attendance at School" - HMI.

Initiated: May 2004

Groups consulted: Governors  
Staff

Reviewed: June 2006  
October 2007  
April 2008  
June 2009

Audience: Staff  
Governors

Policy located: Staff Handbook  
Shared Drive - Policies

Policy format: Full for staff

Policy relates to : Parents' Attendance Policy

## **RESPONDING TO ABSENCE**

We wish to achieve and maintain good attendance rates and therefore our response to absence needs to be swift to be effective.

We aim to:

- foster high expectations for attendance from staff, students and parents;
- make contact by phone where there is unexplained absence on the first day of that absence, using truancy call;
- respond consistently and efficiently - the message must be clear i.e. absences are not allowed for reasons other than determined by the law;
- reward positive attendance and punctuality to School;
- encourage parents to contact school on the first day of absence.

A system of First Day Absence contact can:

- \* reduce the number of short term absences and thereby reduce the overall absence rate;
- \* reduce the number of students who develop into long term absentees;
- \* increase the contact between school and parents;
- \* develop habits amongst parents and students that reduce casual absence and encourage early contact from parents.

### **The LEA's and Educational Welfare Service' Responsibilities**

The Education Welfare Service acts on behalf of the LEA and is responsible for the enforcement of attendance of all registered students. It has an obligation to do this through legal action if necessary.

The service must:

- Inspect registers at least twice per term and contact parents or carers of students who have high levels of absence or lateness.
- Discuss at the regular routine visits to schools, students who are attendance concerns and respond appropriately.
- Act on requests made by the school concerning the lack of contact on the first day of absence, punctuality and attendance concerns.

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- Provide support, if necessary, from the Ethnic Minorities Service for parents or carers who have English as a second language.
- The EWO will liaise with School and negotiate dates and times for meetings and Attendance Panels
- Fortnightly meetings will be held with the EWO, Community Manager and the Attendance Officer.
- A timetable of EWO visits and actions will be drawn up each term and published to all.

## Parents' and Carers' Responsibilities

The school recognises that:

*'parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly'* (DfES 1999)

### First Day Absence

- Parents / Carers are expected to contact the school early in the morning **before 9.00am on the day of absence** to explain the reason and duration of the known absence and there after on each day that their child is absent.
- Parents / Carers need to recognise what the school regards as unacceptable reasons for absence.
- Parents / Carers should contact the Attendance Office on 01323 514919 (Direct line) and leave a message. This line is available 24 hours each day.
- Parents / Carers who know their child will be absent on the following day then have the option to phone the evening before.
- Parents / Carers should state their child's name, mentor group, day and reason for absence.
- Parents / Carers should send a dated letter explaining the absence when the student returns to School. Parents can use the Absence Slip in the Student Planner
- Parents / Guardians are requested to liaise with the School about specific problems which might cause absence.

### Absences for Medical reasons

- Parents / Carers are requested, whenever possible, to try to make all appointment **outside** of School hours. If an appointment has to be made during school hours a medical certificate has to be provided. Where possible, students should return to school after the appointment
- When a student has a medical condition that may affect attendance and punctuality to School, parents / carers must contact the School to discuss possible arrangements e.g. Reduced timetable. Once an arrangement has been agreed, students should sign in at the Attendance Office each day.

### Absences for Holidays

- **Parents are strongly requested not to take holidays in term time.**
- Requests to take students out of School during term time are always denied in line with an agreed policy by all Eastbourne Schools. Eastbourne Technology College is adhering to the policy adopted by all Eastbourne and Hailsham schools to authorise holidays only in exceptional circumstances. Requests for any period of absence for the purpose of a family holiday will only be considered in *exceptional circumstances*, with reference to the student's attendance record and the timing of exams or tests such as SATs.
- A few students may benefit from a holiday if we feel they are able to benefit from a different working environment and can succeed with the help of their family on their assigned projects. This would refer to those students with a very particular set of needs.
- It is the responsibility of the parents / carers to collect a holiday form from the Attendance Office and complete and return it to the Attendance Officer **at least 10 days before the requested period of absence.**
- Separated or divorced parents who would like to request absence for holiday with their son / daughter, should try to liaise with each other before completing the Request Form.

### The School's Role and Responsibilities

#### Stamentory Registrations

- The School day is divided into two sessions and statutory registration takes place at the beginning of both these sessions:  
**AM = 8.40 – 8.50 (Lesson 1) and PM = 2.00 – 2.15 (Lesson 5)**
- The class teacher completes the register during the first 10 minutes of Lesson 1, Lesson 4 and Lesson 5
- These registers are taken on the teacher's computer using the SIMS attendance module.

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- Marks should only be overridden if the student is present in class.
- Any correspondence relating to a student's absence should be dealt with by the Mentor: signed and passed to the Attendance Officer after the teacher has input the data into SIMS Attendance. If one suspects that the note is forged, the Community Manager should be informed.
- Cover and supply staff will be issued with a hard copy register by the SIMS Manager. These should be used if there is a fire evacuation, no laptop is available or there is a technical problem with the teachers' computer
- Staff **must not** provide the Attendance Office with a handwritten list of names.
- Should a register (either hard copy or SIMS) not be available, in the first instance, teachers should contact their Head of Faculty for a printed version or photocopy to complete and return.
- For late arrivals see section on **Punctuality**.

### **First Day of Absence Contact**

- On the **first** day of absence in **all** cases the automated call system will attempt to make contact with parents / carers (unless other agreements have been reached)
- Satisfactory explanations for absence will be entered on to the system; unsatisfactory explanations for absence will be followed up by **the Community Manager and coded accordingly**
- Should no contact be made, a further call will go out on the following day and each day thereafter.

### **Monitoring Absences and Absence Management**

#### **Attendance Tracking**

Students are identified for tracking normally at the end of each term – general criteria for including a student for attendance tracking is attendance below 90% for the term and sporadic absences. Attendance targets are set and formally reviewed on a three weekly basis by the AO.

**Informal Attendance Panels:-** Will be held by the AO/Community Manager, parents/carers and student. AO will invite parents to attend. Targets will be set and should there be no improvement in attendance AO will refer student details to EWS for further action.

### Traffic Lighting

All students will be placed in either a RED, AMBER OR GREEN category. These are in line with ESCC and EWS Guidelines.

RED:	Attendance below 85%
AMBER:	Attendance between 85% and 93%
GREEN:	Attendance above 93%

Parents / Carers will be notified via the *Summative Assessment Reports* regarding the category into which their child has been placed. Students placed in the RED category will be notified separately to the SAR. An explanation of the situation and actions the School may take will be in the letter accompanying the SAR.

### Strategies for monitoring and managing Absence

- The **Community Manager** is responsible for maintaining an accurate overview of the Community's patterns of attendance and lateness, and securing further action as necessary. This will involve working with mentors, Community Director, Attendance Office and EWO.
- Fortnightly meetings will be held with each Community Manager, EWO and Attendance Officer.
- Class lists should be accurate and maintained by the Head of Faculty in order to ensure student absence is accurately noted.
- **Weekly Overview of register: Community Manager issues weekly code reports to the Mentors.** Mentors should check and amend by the end of Thursday of the same week using the SIMS Attendance. If there are any errors the Community Manager should amend after having received satisfactory evidence. The Community Manager is responsible for chasing student queries with assistance from the AO / Community Director, especially regarding PM absences,. Any outstanding **Code N** (no reason for absence given or received) should act as a prompt to ask for a letter from the parent / guardian.
- **Weekly Attendance Percentage Reports:** These will be issued by the Attendance Officer to Community Director and Community Manager.
- **Mentor Group Patterns of Absence:** The **Mentor** is responsible, with the **Community Manager**, for identifying and responding to absence patterns using SIMS Attendance overview e.g. regular absence on same day, regular absence with another student in the mentor group, regular absence from specific lessons.
- **Formal Attendance panels:** These will be held by the EWO, Community Manager, parents/carers and student. The EWS will invite parents to attend. Targets will be set by the EWO and should there be no improvement in attendance then the EWS will refer to legal process.

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- **Truancy Sweeps and Swoops:** These will be organised by the EWS and the police. The school will provide a base and absence data.

### Lesson Registration

- Lesson registers are taken using the SIMS Attendance
- If a **Subject Teacher** suspects that a student is truanting from a lesson (e.g. marked present earlier in the day), completes a **Code O** on SIMS: unauthorised absence. The Community Manager will investigate these absences daily.
- The **Mentor** will also investigate the matter by speaking to the student in registration the following day and issue appropriate sanctions.
- When an absence is foreseen, subject teachers must include a group list with the work set for lesson. When there is an unforeseen absence, **cover and supply teachers** will be issued with hard copy registers by the SIMS Manager.

### Punctuality

- Students who arrive at Lesson 1 and Lesson 5 after the register has been taken will be marked as late (SIMS code L ). Close of registration is 9.20 am. After this students are marked “U”, which is considered an absence for the session.
- Students who arrive at School after am and pm Lesson 1 and 5 registration is finished must sign in at the Attendance Office or the Student Office. Students should complete a **Late Slip** to take to their lesson. They will receive a late mark. If a student arrives at Lesson 1 or PM registration without a late slip, they must be sent back to the Attendance Office to collect one
- Students who arrive after Lesson 1 must sign in at the Attendance Office
- Students who have arrived at school but who are late to lessons are the responsibility of the **Subject Teacher**. A suitable sanction should be issued (e.g. student stays behind for a few minutes at break, lunch, or after school; a note in the students’ planner).
- Students who are persistently late to lessons should be referred in the first instance to the **Head of Faculty** for further sanctions.

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- Students who are persistently late to School will be monitored by the **Attendance Office**. Students with 12 late arrivals or more for a term will be added to Punctuality Tracking by the AO. Close of registration for these students will be brought forward to 9.00 am. The student's punctuality will be reviewed three weekly. If a student continues to be late after review the close of registration will be brought forward again to 8.45 am. A late arrival to school after close of registration will be recorded as an unauthorised lateness mark which constitutes an unauthorised absence. If a student accrues 10 unauthorised absence sessions in a specified period the AO may refer the students details to the EWS for further action.
- **Lateness Panels:** will be held by the EWO, Community Managers, parents / carers and student. The EWS will invite parents to attend.
- **Late Gate:** Periodically the EWS, Police Liaison Officer and representative of SMT will stand at the School gates checking the punctuality of students arriving after 8.40am particularly those who are dropped off to College by parents after 8.40am.
- If further action is required, the EWO will become involved; a letter will be sent and the case reviewed monthly.

### **Positive Attendance: Attendance and Punctuality Incentives and Rewards**

The School recognises that by raising awareness of attendance and lateness issues via a variety of means and strategies such a sustained effort will have an impact on the overall attendance and punctuality figures.

- **Mentors** are responsible for clarifying with their Mentor Groups the School's expectations, sanctions and rewards. And, through establishing a positive relationship with the group they can identify and deal with attendance and punctuality issues as they arise. The Mentor promotes any competitions and challenges which the school or Year Head instigates.
- **Community Manager's & Community Directors** promote Attendance and Punctuality as issues through Assemblies and by organising challenges for forms and individuals issuing prizes and rewards as appropriate.
- Certificates will be awarded termly to those students who have achieved 100% attendance and punctuality
- A special certificate will be issued in the Celebration of Achievement held in the final term to all students achieving 100% attendance for the year

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- Under the 'Traffic Light' system, students who meet the threshold will receive 'Green' letters
- Parents of students whose attendance improves after being tracked will receive congratulatory letters.
- An Attendance Cup will be awarded termly to the Community which has the best attendance.

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**ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY: SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

	<b>KEY RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>KEY TASKS</b>
MENTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility for the attendance &amp; punctuality of their Mentor Group</li> <li>Raises awareness of the importance of good attendance and its impact on learning and the importance of good timekeeping within their group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completes a check on a.m. attendance and punctuality during Mentor Time using SIMS and remind students of sanctions as appropriate</li> <li>checks the previous day's p.m. registration and follow up any students marked absent updating SIMS</li> <li>signs, date &amp; pass notes / evidence to COMMUNITY MANAGER</li> <li>monitors all absences and refer concerns to COMMUNITY MANAGER</li> <li>checks and amends weekly overview sheets</li> <li>issues sanctions to students who are late to school and who fail to attend the break time detention</li> </ul>
SUBJECT TEACER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitors attendance and punctuality to lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>takes SIMS register for all lessons</li> <li>issues sanctions for lateness to lessons</li> <li>informs the mentor when a student is missing from lessons and truancy is suspected</li> <li>sends students who are late to school and who arrive in lessons (p1 and p5) without a late slip back to the attendance office</li> <li>ensures on a regular basis that class registers are accurate</li> </ul>
COMMUNITY MANAGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With AO monitors attendance and punctuality for community group</li> <li>Supports Head of Community, Mentors and Attendance Office</li> <li>Attends Panels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Print and monitors weekly attendance overviews for their community</li> <li>with Attendance Office follows up regular absence</li> <li>organises rewards</li> <li>meets fortnightly with EWO/AO</li> <li>print up-to-date paper registers and retain for fire evacuation purposes for their community</li> </ul>
COMMUNITY DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Responsible for leading and managing mentors so policy is implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitors work of Community Manager</li> <li>organises competitions and challenges</li> </ul>
SIMS ADMIN.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issue hard copy registers to cover/supply teachers for P.5</li> </ul>
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure Attendance Policy is implemented</li> <li>Evaluate and Develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>liaise with EWO, Attendance Officer, Community Director &amp; Community Manager</li> </ul>

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	Attendance Policy	
ATTENDANCE OFFICE STAFF (KFR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input data relating to attendance and punctuality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>send absence letters</li> <li>initiate Truancy Call</li> <li>issue late slips/authorised absence passes</li> <li>Attendance tracking whole school</li> <li>Punctuality tracking whole school</li> <li>attend LEA AO officer meetings</li> <li>liaise with SMT regarding policy</li> <li>attend fortnightly meetings with EWO &amp; Community Manager</li> <li>run break detentions for lateness</li> <li>Complete termly and periodic returns for EWS including PA return</li> <li>Print and collate termly traffic light attendance letters for whole school</li> <li>Provide weekly and termly attendance comparative graphs for Community Managers/PTH</li> </ul>
SCHOOL OFFICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicates &amp; logs sanctions relating to attendance &amp; punctuality</li> </ul>	
EWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>liaises with HoC and Community Managers over poor attenders who have failed to respond to school action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manage cases of poor attenders</li> <li>meet fortnightly with Attendance Officer, Community Managers &amp; Assistants</li> <li>arrange Attendance &amp; Punctuality Panels and Assemblies</li> <li>arrange am and pm sweeps and swoops</li> </ul>