

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

2023/2024



ROCHESTER  
INDEPENDENT COLLEGE

This Policy makes direct references to the DfE document, 'Working together to improve school attendance' 2022. Further information can be found in this document and will be referred to by the college in all instances of attendance concerns.

We want to support all of our students and their parents/guardians/carers so that they have the best possible experience at Rochester Independent College and reach their full potential. Students with excellent attendance are more successful in school and achieve significantly higher outcomes. Low attendance can be seen as a safeguarding concern (KCSIE 2023) and is a whole school responsibility and priority.

The law entitles every child of a school age to a full time education suitable to their age and any additional needs. Whilst we recognise that some medical conditions or SEND may provide barriers to education, the student's right to education remains the same as their peers. We will strive to work with families and students to minimise the barriers students face and put in additional support where necessary to ensure that all students are able to access their full time education.

We recognise that there can be barriers to school attendance and for some students it is harder to attend school than others so we will continue to work closely with parents/guardians/carers, seeking their support throughout the student's time with us. This policy will be applied fairly and consistently but will consider the individual needs of the student and their family.

It is the legal responsibility of the parents/guardians/carers to ensure that their child accesses education either within a school or by education other than a school. This means the student must attend the college every day it is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances.

We would like everyone to maintain 100% attendance and it is our expectation that all students achieve at least 95% attendance. The table below demonstrates the impact of missing even a small percentage of lessons:

Student attendance over the year	... number of days missed	... number of teaching hours missed
95%	9	54
90%	18	108
85%	26	156
80%	35	210
75%	44	264

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole college and holds the principal to account for the implementation of this policy. Attendance figures are published to the governing body through the Governors Report.

The Safeguarding and Pastoral Director is responsible for implementation of this policy at the college, monitoring absence data and reporting it to the governors, principal and supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students.

The Attendance Manager monitors attendance data across the college and at an individual student level to support early intervention, reducing absence before it becomes habitual. They report concerns about attendance/punctuality to the Director of Safeguarding and Pastoral to tackle persistent absence/punctuality issues. They will also lead on the communication with parents/guardians/carers to discuss day to day attendance issues. Day to day they ensure registers are accurate and complete using the relevant DfE absence codes.

Heads of Lower School and Sixth Form work with the Director of Safeguarding and Pastoral and Attendance Manager to tackle persistent absence/punctuality issues. They support communication with parents/guardians/carers to discuss attendance issues. They have knowledge of attendance data in their respective areas of the college and at an individual student level to support early intervention so reducing absence before it becomes habitual.

Tutors will support and monitor tutees regarding issues of attendance and maintain communication with parents/guardians/carers and members of teaching staff.

Parents/carers perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are on the college roll attend regularly and are punctual.

All students are to be punctual to lessons and registrations. Any work missed through absence must be made up promptly upon return to college. Tutors will check that students have sought out the relevant teachers to achieve this. Houseparents are responsible for checking that residential students arrive at registration and lessons on time.

## **Absence**

If a student is going to be absent the parents/guardians/carers must notify the college on the first day by 9am or as soon as practicably possible using [absence@rochester-college.org.uk](mailto:absence@rochester-college.org.uk) or calling the college directly. The parents/guardians/carers should then call on each concurrent day, unless medical advice has been sought and the length of the absence has been agreed.

If the absence is a planned absence, for example a medical appointment, the parents/guardians/carers should notify the college in advance. We encourage parents/guardians/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of college hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should

be out of education for the minimum amount of time necessary. The student's parents/guardians/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible. The final decision on whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised rests with the college.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parents/guardians/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note or proof of the appointment or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

Parents/guardians/carers, onsite medical staff and senior boarding staff are the only people who can authorise absences. All absences are recorded on ISAMS and parents/guardians/carers will be notified of any unauthorised absence.

### **Boarding Students**

Unwell boarding students will be supported by the Boarding Team and the school Nursing team. If a student is too unwell to attend classes, they will be marked out by the appropriate staff member. As they will be looked after by college staff, they will be marked as present for AM/PM registers and for Contact Points.

If an appointment is arranged by the college, they will be marked absent as required by a member of staff. If an appointment is made by a parent/guardian/carer, the College should be informed by phone or email at least 25 hours in advance.

If you would like to take your child out of school during term time (for example a family holiday), you should put the request in writing to the Principal as early as possible. Please note that such a request will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and you should not make any bookings before approval has been granted.

Students absent without permission from boarding will be dealt with, initially, through our Missing Students Policy.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

KCSIE 2023 places further emphasis on students absent from education as a safeguarding concern, especially if this is for prolonged periods or repeated occasions. Any student whose attendance falls below 95% will be referred to the Pastoral and Safeguarding Director for review. Disciplinary procedures or welfare interventions will be followed as appropriate. In order to ensure early intervention, attendance data is circulated to Tutors via the shared online drive at the end of every week. Tutors can then follow up on any minor attendance issues with students/parents/guardians/carers.

Persistent absenteeism is attendance below 90%. If a student's attendance falls below this, it will be referred to the Principal.

The Pastoral and Safeguarding Director will check the attendance data and follow up on any patterns of non-attendance half termly. Through regular monitoring, students who are identified as needing additional support with attendance will be targeted and the relevant actions discussed with the student and their parents/guardians/carers. If there is no improvement, despite a collaborative effort, an escalation of support may be required. Depending on the individual circumstances, there may be a requirement for a multi-disciplinary support, a targeted support meeting, parenting contract, involvement from the Local Authority Attendance Support Team or Integrated Children's Services. If there is still no improvement, the local authority may seek legal intervention.

See also Children Missing in Education (CME) Policy.

### **Lateness**

If a student (day) is running late they must contact Student Services using either [absence@rochester-college.org.uk](mailto:absence@rochester-college.org.uk) or telephone the college. On arrival at the college the student needs to sign in with the Student Services Team in Star Hill.

If a boarder is running late they must contact their House Parent who will coordinate them getting to lessons.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

The Attendance Manager at the college is responsible for monitoring student absence and punctuality. ISAMS is the college information management system and is used to record attendance. The Attendance Manager and Director of Safeguarding and Pastoral analyse attendance data to inform practices and next steps for individual students and cohorts who may need support.

A register is taken for each timetabled lesson and group tutor period. Teachers should take the register within the first 10 minutes of the lesson and report any missing students who have not arrived within the first 15 minutes. This should be done using the alert function on the electronic register.

An AM and PM register is recorded each day. An AM register will be marked if a student has been marked as present at any academic register point before lunch, and a PM register will be marked if a student has been marked present at any academic register post lunch.

For UKVI purposes, the college recognises a contact point each day Monday to Friday (when the college is open) if either an AM or PM register has been marked as present.

### **Sponsored Students**

Good attendance is part of the conditions of stay for sponsored students studying in the UK. It is the responsibility of the college to ensure accurate attendance monitoring and prompt follow up. We may cease sponsorship of students who fail to meet the attendance requirements or those who miss ten consecutive contact points without authorisation from the Principal.

Students missing 5 contact points without authorisation will be subject to a Pastoral Review with the Pastoral and Safeguarding Director and Dukes Student Immigration Manager. This meeting will put in place a plan to support the student improving attendance or allow the college to increase support and monitoring of the situation.

Should a student miss 10 contact points without authorisation, the college will review the situation. There is a strong possibility that the college will cease sponsorship and report the absence to the UKVI at this stage. In such cases, UKVI are likely to curtail the student’s permission to stay in the UK and the student will have to return to their home country.

If a sponsored student is absent from college for a significant period of time for any reason, an Academic and Pastoral Review with Dukes Student Immigration Manager will take place every two weeks from the first day of absence. The college will cease sponsorship if, as a result of the review process, it is concluded that it is unlikely that the student will be able to complete the course of study described on their CAS within the period of their permission to enter/stay in the UK. If the absence from college exceeds 60 days, the presumption is that sponsorship will be withdrawn at that time. This is unless there are exceptional circumstances such as serious illness or injury **and** providing ongoing bi-weekly Academic and Pastoral Reviews do not conclude that the student is unlikely to be able to complete their course of study within the period of their permission to enter/stay, otherwise sponsorship will cease.

### **Part Time Timetables**

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student’s best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable is not used to manage a student’s behaviour. Part time timetables will be documented and reviewed regularly and agreed with the student and parents.

### **Communication**

The Attendance Policy is available from the college.

Communication in the context of attendance is recorded on the student’s electronic file.

<b>Created/Updated</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Date</b>
October 2017	CD	AB	October 2017
September 2018	CD	KF	September 2018
September 2019	CD	AB	September 2019
September 2020	KF	AB	September 2020
August 2021	KF	AB	August 2021
September 2022	HR, KS & CD	KF	September 2022
May 2023	KS, JW	AB	May 2023

September 2023	KS,JW	AB	September 2023
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