



# Attendance and Unauthorised Absence Policy

Whole school	WEBSITE
Statutory?	Yes
Reviewed	October 2024
Next review	October 2026

## INTRODUCTION

At King's Ely we believe that pupils can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly and arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that pupils should not be at school if they are unwell. All staff are responsible for the safeguarding and promoting of each pupil's welfare and are aware that frequent absence from school can sometimes be an indicator of abuse, neglect, radicalisation, bullying or the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences and the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents/guardians.

Our aims are:

- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes good attendance.
- To ensure, as far as possible, that every pupil can benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the school.
- To build strong relationships with families, encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- To respond proactively to non-attendance and/or lateness in a proportionate and targeted way.
- To work closely with pupils, their families and, if appropriate, the local authority where attendance becomes a concern.

We expect the highest standards of attendance and punctuality, reflecting our commitment to wellbeing and achievement. **Our minimum attendance target is 90%.**

The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance at the school (Senior Attendance Champion) is Mr Charlie Fisher, Designated Safeguarding Lead. For day-to-day attendance matters, please contact the school via the absence email address [absentees@kingsely.org](mailto:absentees@kingsely.org) or by calling the main school office for senior school, or by contacting Reception in King's Ely, or by contacting Reception in King's Ely Acremont.

At Fairstead House, Mr Michael Radford (Head) is responsible for attendance. For any absences, the school office can be contacted via email [secretary@fairsteadhouse.org](mailto:secretary@fairsteadhouse.org) or by phone 01638 662318.

This policy meets the school's responsibilities under the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- Working together to improve school attendance August 2024
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance August 2024
- Children missing education September 2016
- Keeping children safe in education September 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other school documents:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Drugs, Alcohol & Smoking Policy;
- King's Ely Statement on British Values and preventing radicalisation;

- Missing Child Policy (including procedures for children not collected at the end of the day/activity).
- Social Respect (Anti-Bullying) Policy & Strategy;
- Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy.
- Supervision Policy

## **SCHOOL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **School Governing Board**

- Maintain an overview of attendance through termly reports
- Regularly monitor, review and challenge attendance data
- Review and support school interventions

### **Principal**

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school, including implementation of this policy
- Reports to the governors on attendance

### **Heads of Section**

- Has responsibility for attendance within their sections of the school, including implementation of this policy
- Authorise exceptional leave of absence for pupils in their sections
- Liaise with Attendance Officer on cases where attendance is a concern and intervention may be necessary

### **Senior Attendance Champion and Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- Is the nominated senior leader with responsibility for attendance across the school
- Ensures everyone works together to create a school culture that promotes good attendance
- Regularly monitors and analyses attendance data against a range of metrics
- Establishes and maintains effective systems for tackling absence, evaluating these at regular intervals
- Alongside the pastoral team, delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Liaises with the local authority
- Becomes actively involved and leads where attendance is also a safeguarding issue

### **ISAMS Database Manager**

- Receives, updates and maintains accurate class registers in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

## ATTENDANCE

- Information on procedures for when a child is late, sick or absent for another reason is given to parents/guardians in the Information Handbook for parents and pupils. This highlights the importance of pupils being at school on time and parents/guardians need to notify the school well in advance, if any absence can be foreseen.
- At the induction meetings held each year for parents/guardians of children about to enter the school, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. The need for pupils to arrive at school on time so that each pupil can be given the best possible start to each school day is emphasised. The need for pupils to be picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left. In the case of children in King's Ely Acremont and EYFS, if a child is not collected, they will move to after-school wraparound care if parents have been contacted and are delayed. If parents or other emergency contact are not in school by 6:30pm, children will remain at school with two members of staff until the parent arrives or alternative arrangements are made by Cambridgeshire Social Care Team. At Fairstead House, children who are not collected, will attend After School Care, or remain in their Nursery room. Details regarding non-collection of a child can be found in the Supervision Policy.
- Parents/guardians are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes things upset children which mean they become unhappy and may not want to come to school. Parents/guardians need to be alert to this.
- Parents are strongly advised to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays rather than in term time, so that their child's education is not disrupted. The Principal talks to those parents who persistently take their holidays in term time, reminding them of the negative impact of such disruption upon their child's education. Pupils travelling from overseas are encouraged to make travel arrangements well in advance, whilst places on suitable flights are available. When returning home for the holidays, it is preferable that flights are arranged so that no lessons are missed on the last day of term. However, in some cases where there are few flights, pupils may be allowed to leave early on the last day of term. In this case, the pupils must always check with their teachers in order to catch up on work that has been missed. The School usually expects pupils from overseas to be at school until the end of term and is not usually willing to release them earlier without good reason.
- Parents are reminded that all pupils are required to attend those activities arranged on a Saturday for which they have opted. In addition, those School events and sports or other fixtures arranged on a Saturday are expected to be fully supported and attended by pupils as required. Parents are strongly urged to encourage their children to attend those school events scheduled on Saturdays as detailed in the Almanack.
- If a pupil is recorded as absent in the attendance register without explanation, the school office will telephone the parent/guardian soon after the start of school to enquire as to the reason for absence, in case the pupil has left home but failed to arrive at school.

- Pupils arriving late to school must report to the relevant office where their presence is recorded by the secretary/receptionist before they return to class. In the case of King's Ely Acremont pupils, parents/guardians should accompany the child to undertake this task.

### **Concerns about late arrival or a pattern of absences will be shared**

If a pupil is regularly late for school or is often absent then the parents/guardians will be contacted so that a solution to the problem can be found (see appendix for process)

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Registers are a legal document, and care must be taken to ensure they are marked accurately and in accordance with the regulations. Attendance of all pupils is recorded and monitored following the procedures below:

- Registration is carried out at 8:25am and between 1.00pm and 1.55pm.
- At Fairstead House, AM registration is from 8.20-8.40am; PM registration is between 1.00pm and 1.30pm.
- The AM register will be open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after registration but before the register is closed will be marked late. Punctuality is monitored and frequent or regular lateness will be considered a cause for concern.
- Any pupil arriving after the register is closed will be marked absent. Parents should provide a note of explanation for any pupil arriving after the register has closed. Lateness without reasonable cause will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Any Senior School pupil arriving after registration period should sign in at the main reception.
- The absentee team checks for missing marks or unaccounted absences and contacts parents where required.
- In the Senior School, Subject teachers take a register at the start of their lesson and if they are concerned that a pupil hasn't arrived at their lesson, then they should immediately use the ISAMS register alert function to generate an email that informs the pupils tutor, HsM, Head of Year and the Health and Wellbeing Centre.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, they must sign out at reception.

## **ADMISSIONS REGISTER**

King's Ely will carry out its statutory responsibility to inform Cambridgeshire County Council and Fairstead House will meet its statutory duty to inform Suffolk County Council when a pupil is added or deleted from the admissions register at non-standard transition (i.e. where a pupil of compulsory school age leaves before completing the final year or joins after the beginning of the first year). There are fifteen official grounds for removing a pupil, set out in detail in *'Working together to improve school attendance'* (Aug 24) and *'Children Missing in Education'* (2016). Furthermore, as per Government regulations, it is practice at King's Ely that, where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the new address; the full name of the

parent with whom the pupil will normally live in future; and the date from which it is expected the pupil will normally live there, is recorded on the admissions database.

The School has the right to remove a pupil from its Admission Register in accordance with the terms and conditions of the School's Parent Contract.

In addition, in compliance with the safeguarding guidance on children missing education in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', King's Ely will inform the local authority where the pupil is normally resident when the pupil is deleted from the admissions register at non-standard transitions.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

All staff at King's Ely are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning. They are also concerned about each pupil's safety, welfare and happiness. Frequent absence may raise safeguarding concerns; therefore the school will take appropriate action immediately. In line with the school's responsibilities under the Prevent Duty<sup>1</sup>, staff are aware of the signs that could indicate the potential radicalisation<sup>2</sup> of a pupil and are aware of the possible implications of extended travel by a pupil to conflict zones in terms of radicalisation, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

If truancy is suspected, the Head of section is notified, who then contacts the parents/guardians, either by phone, or by home visiting if necessary. Parents/guardians are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parents/guardians then the Head of section or Housemaster/mistress talks to the pupil concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that pupil not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher or tutor and appropriate action is taken.

It is important to note that, all schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or following an unauthorised absence of more than 10 school days (continuous). The School will comply with its statutory duties and local authority requirements with regard to reporting unauthorised absences. The school will not delete a pupil for non-return until the grounds for deletion are met.

The School will comply with its duties as a sponsor of pupils of non-UK nationals resident overseas at the School under a UK Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies Tier 4 (Child) Visa. The school will inform the UK Visa and Immigration of any unauthorised absences of 10 or more days, or failing to meet an average attendance of 80%, and of any unauthorised absences on the first day of term.

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<sup>1</sup> A duty under S.26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

<sup>2</sup> Radicalisation' refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism.

## **FIXTURES**

It is school policy that, if a pupil is selected to represent the school, he/she must do so and this must take priority over social engagements. If it is impossible for the pupil to do so as, for example, the player has been selected to represent the county or has an essential family engagement; parents/guardians should alert the school well in advance. Permission should only be sought in exceptional circumstances (see **Section on Attendance**).

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

King's Ely recognises the importance of faith and religious observance in the lives of many of our pupils. We value the diversity and richness that all religions and cultures bring to the school community. The right to religious observance is protected in law and has the full support of the school.

Any requests for absence for occasions of religious observance must be made in writing to the relevant Head of section and with as much notice as possible, so that arrangements can be put in place for a pupil to catch-up on any work missed during his or her absence.

## **APPENDIX ONE: ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION DATA:**

### **1. The Attendance Register**

All software and data backups are managed by iSAMS, ensuring comprehensive data protection. Full database backups are completed weekly and retained for 33 weeks, while transaction log backups are carried out every 30 minutes and retained for 30 days. These backups are securely stored both on-site and off-site within the UK. King's Ely has no direct access to or management of the backups performed by iSAMS.

The am/pm daily pupil registration records are taken via iSAMS and backed up daily and stored on two separate hard disk arrays (Server and Veams). This is kept in perpetuity in electronic/data format and accessibly by way of searching for particular records via the iSAMS system.

In addition, by way of a recurring calendar reminder, the Database Manager will run a report at least every 14 days to identify if there are any student registrations with a 'N-No reason yet provided' or any 'Not Yet Registered', using the report to followed up across all sections of the school so all pupils registrations are properly accounted for with a valid reason for absence. This further report/check every 14 days is in addition to daily checking/chasing by support staff in each section.

### **2. The Admissions Register (Pupil specific data within the iSAMS database)**

The Database Manager ensures all the necessary fields on iSAMS are complete as per the necessary fields for the school's Admissions Register (as stipulated by the regulations/within the ISI Commentary on Regulatory requirements).

The Admissions Register pupil data within the iSAMS database is backed up each 24 hours to the main server storage as well as secondary bank of mirror storage drives in a building separate from the servers.

The Database Manager also does a separate monthly export (into Excel format) of certain data to store on OneDrive; this is also backed up nightly and onto the mirror storage. The data exported is:

- The Admissions Register records for all current pupils
- Complete Pupil record export (including all associated contact details)
- Basic lists of pupil details by year groups and academic status (name, DoB, form group, gender, Day/Boarding). Essentially form lists.

The records will be kept for at least 3 years.



## APPENDIX TWO: LOW ATTENDANCE PROCESS:

### Attendance Issues Guidelines

The government defines persistent absence from education as an attendance rate of below 90%. Furthermore, the school recognises its duty to act with the Local Authority to identify children missing education (children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school) and shares a belief that all children are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children go missing from education for a range of reasons and they may be at risk of significant harm.

The school maintains an Admissions Register. If a pupil fails to attend school on the first agreed day of attendance, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity, especially if the child's whereabouts cannot be ascertained.

The school will follow through statutory safeguarding duties to investigate any unexplained absences.

The school follows CPSPB guidance on reporting the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly. The School must report any continuous pupil absences, greater than 10 school days, where no reason is given, but may report sooner.

The school attendance champion produces a weekly report that indicates all pupils who have dropped below a 90% attendance threshold for the term. This will identify those pupils who have a history of attendance issues but may not pick up all those who are a potential concern. It is therefore important that tutors look out for trends and patterns and use their professional curiosity to identify issues.

The process flow is as follows:

1. Through the AM registration process, a tutor identifies that attendance is low. If necessary, they should contact a DSO in order to establish the precise attendance %.
2. If a pupil is **absent sick for 5 consecutive days**, then the tutor/HsM should:
  - a. Contact parents/guardians to check in and to establish whether this is a short-term absence (e.g. 'flu or similar) or if it is likely to become a longer term issue (e.g. glandular fever or similar).

If it is likely to become a long-term issue, then a concern should be logged on MyConcern, the Med Centre informed, and support offered to manage access to education and a return to school.

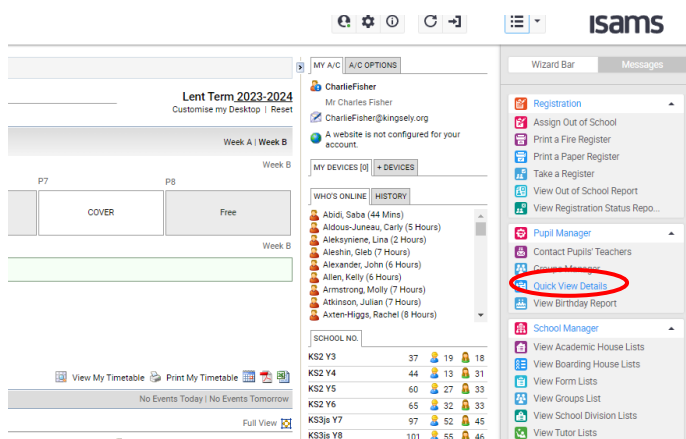
3. If the pupil has been **absent sick for 10 consecutive days**, then the tutor should:
  - a. Contact the parents/guardians to request a doctor's note.
  - b. Log a concern on MyConcern, ensure that the Med Centre is informed, and support offered to the family to manage access to education and a return to school.

4. If the pupil has **accumulated 15 days absence** over the course of the year or has dropped **below 80% attendance** for the year to date then the tutor should:
  - a. Raise a log of concern in MyConcern
  - b. Contact parents to make sure that they are aware of the amount of school that has been missed and the impact that this will have. The communication should be clear that the school cannot guarantee quality of education once attendance has dropped to this extent. The communication should also offer support to help the pupil access their education and inform parents/guardians that this could include an Early Help Application (EHA) to the Local Authority.

Please note that these timelines and thresholds are indicative. The pupil's pastoral team may decide that the process outlined above is not necessary (in which case the rationale must be recorded in MyConcern). Equally, the pastoral team may decide that this process needs to be accelerated.

### Checking attendance using the Pupil Quick View link in ISAMs

1. Click on Quick View Details:



2. Type in the pupil's name and then click on the attendance tab. You can chose which term you want to look at using the drop down on the right hand side:

The screenshot shows the 'ATTENDANCE' tab in the ISAMs interface. It features a 'Day View' and 'Week View' toggle, and a 'Select Term' dropdown menu set to 'Lent : 08/01/2024 - 27/03/2024 23:59:00'. The main area is a grid with columns for time slots (07:30, 08:25, 09:00, 09:55, 11:10, 12:05, 12:06, 12:55, 13:55, 14:50, 15:45) and rows for dates from 08-Jan-2024 to 23-Jan-2024. Each cell in the grid contains a letter indicating the attendance status: 'Z' for present, 'Q' for absent, 'I' for ill, 'M' for medical, and 'N' for non-attendance. The grid shows a mix of these statuses over the period.

This does not give you a % attendance but will allow you to see if you need to investigate further.