Attendance Policy



Ellesmere College

Attendance Policy

Parents or guardians of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996).

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the school must keep an attendance register.

This Policy follows: DfE Guidance –Working together to improve school attendance 2026. and Summary table of responsibilities for School Attendance 2024. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Child Protection Policy, SEN Policy, Missing Pupil Policy and Pupil Supervision Policy.

Children missing in education is covered in the Child Protection Policy Section 4.5 Missing in Education.

The school is registered with the Information Commissioner under UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

1. Aim

The school is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The school will work with parents and pupils to secure this aim. The other purpose of this attendance policy is to ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that pupils who should be attending the school have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the school.

Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents.

2. Taking the Register

Pupils of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of this school to register ALL pupils (including those over compulsory school age).

The register must be updated twice daily at the start of morning and afternoon sessions. In addition, all teaching staff are asked to check that the pupils who should attend each lesson do so, and are registered on iSAMS.

3. Instructions regarding the completion Of Registers

General points for AM/PM Registers

- A Register is a legal document and must be treated as such;
- School Register times are 8.30am to 8.45am and 1.40m to 2.10pm.
- Registration is not to be done before these times and pupils must be physically seen during this time span.
- The register must be kept in the school for a minimum of six years.
- School Attendance Registers must be available for inspection by registered inspectors.

4. Specific Instructions to Houses, Tutors and House Staff

- The register must be taken at the prescribed times each day and completed on iSAMS by **8.45am** and **2.10pm**. Staff who are unable to update iSAMS must inform Reception immediately.
- The register must be taken in person by a teacher or House staff. Registration may not be delegated to a pupil.
- Every pupil marked as present must be **seen in person at the time of registration** by the member of staff taking the register.
- Any pupil who is not seen at the time of registration must be marked absent using the appropriate attendance code.
- Where a pupil is absent, a reason should be recorded against the registration mark. Notes should be factual and non-intrusive, recognising that they may be viewed by other staff.
- It is the responsibility of house staff (Y9 to Y13) and the Lower School Secretary (Y3 to Y8) to follow-up with parents or carers. This must take place as soon as reasonably practicable on the first day of absence. The pupil must be accounted for and the following established:
    - the reason for absence;
    - whether any safeguarding concerns exist;
    - any barriers to attendance;
    - whether additional support is required; and
    - whether further contact with the family is necessary.
- All unexplained absences and attendance concerns must be recorded. Any concerns relating to a pupil's welfare, safety or whereabouts must be referred without delay to the DSL or Deputy DSL and recorded in accordance with the College's safeguarding procedures.
- Where a pupil's whereabouts remain unknown and their welfare cannot be established, the College's Missing Pupil Procedure must be followed immediately and safeguarding staff informed without delay.
- Any pupil absent continuously for ten school days without authorised leave, whose whereabouts are unknown, or who fails to attend regularly, must be referred to the DHP, who will determine whether notification to the Local Authority is required under Children Missing Education procedures.

5. Lesson Registers

- Registers must be taken in the first 15 minutes of any session on iSAMS. If staff are unable to update the iSAMS registers, then they should let reception know immediately.
- Tutors should mark a pupil as '/' if present, 'N' if absent, and no gaps should be left. In the case of 'N', it is the teacher's responsibility to follow this up as far as possible. If a pupil arrives late, 'L' should be entered and the minutes late noted. If a pupil arrives after the registration period, then 'U' should be entered.
- Known absences for e.g., illness, sporting activity, or trips should be inputted.
- Accurate marking of registers is vital.
- Individual teachers are responsible for the supervision of their classes. Classes should not be left unsupervised. Should the need arise, staff may:
- Summon help from a teacher in an adjacent classroom.
- Use a phone to call Reception 622321 or Medical Centre Ext 229, mobile 07531 801558
- Send the individual with another accompanying to the Medical Centre, if appropriate.
- Members of the Sixth Form with study periods are allowed to work in their House studies. They may also work in the Sixth Form Centre or the Library (there are always members of staff available in the immediate vicinity).

The following codes are to be used in the registers from now on please.

Code	Description	Meaning	Example
/	Present (AM)	Present	Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.
\	Present (PM)	Present	
N	Absent from Roll Call (Reason for absence not yet established)	Reason for absence not yet provided (will need to be changed within 5 days)	
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is an authorised absence.	Parents haven't informed school of absence.
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Late Arrival before the register closes	
U	Arrived in school late after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence.	Poor timekeeping e.g., sleeping through the alarm
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Attending an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school	Attending taster days at other schools Attending courses at college
C	Leave of absence granted by the school	Absence that we know about and has been approved	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours that are supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA.	Paid part in a Film or TV programme.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Pupils who require a part time table to support their learning needs.	Pupils on a reduced timetable.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Suspension of pupil by the school	
F1	On site but not in expected lesson	Present	Participation in approved educational activity rather than timetabled lesson.
MU	Peripatetic music lesson	Present	
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school	Where the school has not granted a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday, but the parents still take the child out of school
I	Illness (including medical emergencies, not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised	
SB	Illness (in Medical Centre)	Authorised absence (in Medical Centre)	
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment	University/College Interview or Job interview
M	Medical or Dental appointment	Authorised absence (Out of School)	
P	Participating in a sporting activity	All Sporting activities off site that have been approved by the school.	Away matches and other sporting events off the school site.
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	

Code	Description	Meaning	Example
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for an examination	Study leave sanctioned by the school	
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attendance at an organised visit or trip, including residential trips organised by the school of a strictly educational nature.	Trips organised by school and supervised by school.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Where a sixth form pupil's timetable does not require them to be on site for every session of the week, may give leave of absence The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed with the parent with whom the pupil normally lives with or the pupil.	Year 13 might request not to attend on a day they have no lessons.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available	School Transport cancelled due to snow.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency	Government warning not to travel.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	Lower School is closed..
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly	Issue in Whole School meaning they aren't able to have lessons in the buildings and its safer for the children to be at home.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: • in police detention, • remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • detained under a sentence of detention	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law		Covid or other Contagious outbreak
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil on register in advance of arriving	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance	Days between terms; half terms occasional days (for example, bank holidays)

6. Attendance Support

Our Commitment

Ellesmere College is committed to working closely with parents and pupils to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance. We recognize that excellent attendance is crucial for academic success, personal development, and safeguarding. Where barriers to attendance arise, we take a supportive, collaborative, and non-punitive approach to help families overcome them.

When a pupil's attendance causes concern, the school will implement a tiered approach to support the student and their family:

E**arly Support:** Parents may be contacted when attendance begins to decline so that any emerging concerns can be identified and addressed at an early stage.

Targeted Support: Where attendance concerns continue, the school may arrange a meeting with the pupil and their family to discuss the situation and agree appropriate support strategies or an attendance action plan.

Enhanced Support: For more significant or prolonged attendance concerns, the school may implement additional support measures and, where appropriate, work with external professionals or agencies to help improve attendance and engagement with school.

Medical and Exceptional Absences

- **Medical Appointments:** We strongly encourage parents to schedule routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school before and after the appointment and wear their school uniform.
- **Illness and Medical Evidence:** For frequent, recurring, or prolonged absences due to illness, the school may request medical evidence (e.g., appointment cards, GP notes) to properly authorize the absence and tailor in-school support.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** Leave of absence for holidays during term time will not be authorized. Applications for leave under exceptional circumstances must be made in writing to the Head in advance.

The College recognises that attendance difficulties may arise from mental health needs, special educational needs, disability, medical conditions or safeguarding concerns. In these circumstances the school will work collaboratively with pupils, parents and external agencies to identify barriers and provide appropriate support before considering enforcement measures.

Reporting

The register must record the following:

- Whether the pupil is present, absent, or attending an approved educational activity.
- An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:
- one taking place off the school premises
- approved by a person authorised by the governing body or the Head
- supervised by a person approved by the governing body or Head
- of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, or for a place in Higher or Further Education.
- Link courses where pupils attend an FE college for part of their time, or franchised pupils receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school supervision (e.g., sick children being taught at home), or attending approved sporting activity.
- When a pupil of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an ‘authorised’ or ‘unauthorised’ absence, giving the nature of the approved educational activity (for a pupil of compulsory school age).

7. Responsibilities

The Head will:

- approve the policy and any proposed changes;

- determine (in collaboration with the DHs and HsMs) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested or absences which have taken place for which no request was made.
- ensure governors are updated on attendance, including trends and any significant concerns.

The Deputy Head Pastoral will:

- be the Senior Attendance Champion;
- be responsible for maintaining good attendance;
- maintain effective systems for tackling absence;
- ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school;
- notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence;
- initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance;
- liaise with the Local Authority (LA) over persistent absentees, if appropriate;
- liaise with the Local Authority (LA) and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school;
- oversee the attendance arrangements;
- work with HsMs to ensure the efficient running of the system;
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor pupil absence;
- make regular checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence;
- analyse attendance, identify trends, monitor groups, review interventions, ensure any significant concerns are reported to governors;
- deal with issues of inadequate registering;
- arrange appropriate training for staff;
- keep the Head informed of the progress of the policy;
- advise the Head on any strategies that could be initiated or improved;
- meet regularly with the local authority appointed EWO to review pupils whose attendance is a concern or falls below Shropshire thresholds (90% to 93% depending on the term)
- specifically inform the EWO of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised. For UKVI sponsored pupils this will also be reported to the UKVI;
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 50% is a severe absence and will require intensive multi-agency intervention protocols to rapidly reintegrate the pupil.
- make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need;
- set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents (Appendix one as an example letter).

The Head of Lower School and / or HsMs will:

- ensure that all pupil absences are noted and absence notes received from parents, Tutors must pass on any request for absence;
- ensure that all registers are completed and handed to the school office at the end of each term;
- make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering;
- ensure that unaccounted for absences are followed up;
- make regular checks on absence notes;
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with;
- contact parents over pupil absences where appropriate;

- liaise with the DHP on the efficiency of the system;
- liaise with the DHP over training needs.

Classroom Teachers will:

- check the attendance of pupils at their lessons;
- register the pupils in iSAMS;
- ascertain the reason for absence and follow-up as necessary;
- inform the HsM of the names of pupils who are absent without notification.

Pupils are required to:

- attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('Attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session);
- if possible, inform the school of their absence on the first day of non-attendance;
- bring an explanatory note on the day of return to school;
- discuss with the tutor any planned absences well in advance (e.g., A medical appointment);
- make any request for leave of absence in good time.

Parents are expected to:

- notify the College as soon as possible on the first day
- work with the College
- attend attendance meetings
- provide medical evidence where requested
- support agreed attendance plans

Governors are expected to:

- receive regular attendance updates including trends and any significant concerns.

8. Inspection

The DHs will ensure that the School Admission and Attendance Registers are available for inspection by ISI, the Secretary of State or authorised officers as required.

9. UKVI Sponsored Pupils

- Sponsored pupils should meet the school expectations on attendance
- Sponsored pupils are subject to review by the EWO
- Any sponsored pupils whose overall attendance drops in accordance with current UKVI sponsor guidance will be reported to UKVI. Sponsorship will be withdrawn unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for non-attendance.

10. Leave of Absence

Leave can be granted only by the Head or in their absence by the DHs. Approval for a leave of absence will be based on recommendation from the HsM and/or DHs, or in line with established protocol.

11. Absence at the Start and End of Terms

- Missing lessons can have a detrimental effect on a pupil's learning and may affect their final exam results. The school does not encourage late arrivals or early leave.
- The application must be made by the parent (or person with parental responsibility) with whom the child normally resides.
- The school recognises that travel arrangements can be difficult and will normally allow arrivals during the first day back. Departures on the last day of term will also be sanctioned.

- Any other absences will be deemed inappropriate and be recorded as such.
- On return to school from extended unauthorised leave, extra supervised work sessions may be put on at the weekend. These would not be optional.

12. Holiday Leave

- Leave of absence should only be granted in exceptional circumstances, so it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. If exceptional circumstances are thought to exist, then formal requests must be made to the Head, via the HsM/HoLS.
- The application must be made by the parent (or person with parental responsibility) with whom the child normally resides.
- The Head will take into account:
    - The age of the child
    - The time of the year proposed
    - The nature of the holiday
    - The views of the HsM and/or DHs
- If the pupil still goes on a holiday which has not been approved by the school, it will be recorded as such.

13. Short Term Leave

The School can legally grant short term leave for family reasons. It is for the Head to determine the reasonableness and length of time the pupil can be away from school.

Dental and medical appointments are valid reasons for missing registration and constitute authorised absence.

If the pupil leaves for an appointment after registering no absence needs to be recorded.

14. Religious Observance

A pupil has not failed to attend school if the absence was on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs. The school expects advance notice, since religious festivals are likely to be fixed well ahead.

15. Monitoring and Review

The Deputy Head Pastoral will review the working of the policy on an annual basis.

Authorised by	The Head	
Date	September 2026	

Reviewed by	DHP	
Date	September 2026	

Effective date of policy	September 2026

Appendix 1: Template letter to parents

Dear Parent,

As we start another academic year, I wanted to take a moment to address the importance of regular school attendance.

As educators, parents, and guardians, we all share the common goal of providing our students with the best possible opportunities for success. One crucial aspect of achieving this goal is ensuring that students attend school regularly and punctually.

Regular school attendance is vital for several reasons:

- **Academic Success**: Attending school regularly allows students to stay engaged with the curriculum, follow lessons consistently, and participate actively in class discussions. This engagement is fundamental for academic success and ensures that students have a solid understanding of the material being taught.
- **Social and Emotional Development**: School provides a crucial environment for social interaction and the development of important life skills. Regular attendance allows students to build friendships, collaborate with peers, and develop essential social and emotional competencies that are invaluable for their future endeavours.
- **Establishing Good Habits**: Regular attendance instils discipline and responsibility in students from a young age. By consistently attending school, students learn the importance of commitment, reliability, and time management, skills that are essential for success in both academic and professional settings.
- **Maximizing Learning Opportunities**: Every day at school presents valuable learning opportunities. Whether it's a new concept in math, a scientific experiment, or a literary discussion, each day contributes to a student's overall growth and development. Missing school means missing out on these opportunities and can hinder a student's progress.

We strive to ensure your child has the best opportunities to be the best they can be, to feel safe and supported in school, and to develop a sense of belonging both with their peers and as a wider part of our school community.

To support that, regular attendance will be key. At Ellesmere College, school starts at 8.30am and finishes at 5.30pm.

Giving your child the best start
90% attendance may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, however in reality that means your child misses half a day of school every week, the equivalent of 16 school days (almost one whole month), during the year. Children who miss this amount of school do not achieve as well as their peers who attend more regularly.

We aim for every pupil to achieve the highest attendance possible.

	Impact over 1 school year	Impact over 5 school years
100% Attendance	0 days missed	0 days missed
95% Attendance	8 days of absence 1 Week and 3 Days of learning lost	¼ year learning lost
90% Attendance	16 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 1 Days of learning lost	½ year learning lost
85% Attendance	25 Days of Absence 5 Weeks of learning lost	¾ year learning lost
80% Attendance	33 Days of Absence 6 Weeks and 3 Days of learning lost	1 year learning lost
75% Attendance	41 Days of Absence 8 weeks and 1 day of learning lost	1 ¼ years learning lost

Our attendance policy is available to read on our school website (Attendance Policy).
This explains how we monitor attendance and follow up absence.

We recognise that on occasion some children may experience illness or have exceptional reasons preventing regular attendance. To assist parents deciding whether their child is too ill to attend school or otherwise, the NHS have produced a guide that you may find useful: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

We know being a parent can be challenging at times and we are here to help if there are any problems affecting your child. If you are worried about your child/children's attendance please speak with your child's Tutor in the first instance or their Housemaster/ Housemistress/Head of Lower School. We will work with you as partners to ensure in such circumstances any identified barriers are discussed so we can best support your child's wellbeing and education. All schools work closely with Early Help, Health and the Local Authority teams who may also be able to help if needed.

Parents and boarding staff best support your child to secure regular attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring a good bedtime routine to enable your child to get enough sleep.
- Establishing a good routine each evening and each morning so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Making sure your child attends school every day it is open, unless there is an exceptional reason preventing this.
- Ensuring your child arrives at school on time every day by 8.30am.
- Arranging dental and medical appointments outside school hours wherever possible, where this is not possible ensure your child attends before and returns promptly afterwards.
- Informing the school if your child is ill and too unwell to attend by contacting either their Housemaster/Housemistress or their Tutor.
- Taking absence seriously – if your child is not wanting to attend, or has not attended as you expected why is this? Are they putting themselves at risk – Who are they with? What are they doing? Do you know who they are talking to online?
- Taking any holidays during school holiday periods, and not during term time - If

children are taken out of school for a one-week holiday every year and have an average number of days off for sickness and medical appointments, then by the time they finish Year 11, they will have missed the equivalent of approximately two terms of schooling.

- Talking positively to your child about school and taking an interest in their school day.
- Attending parents' evenings and school events.
- Praising and rewarding your child's efforts and achievements at school.
- Supporting school staff by working in partnership to best manage and support your child with any difficult or challenging behaviour or circumstances.
- Discussing any problems or difficulties with the school as soon as they arise – staff are here to help.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need further assistance.