



## **Attendance Policy (Under Review)**

### **Introduction**

Regular attendance and high standards of punctuality are crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every pupil can have full access to the school curriculum and reaches their full potential. We recognise the strong link between good attendance and high-quality educational outcomes. Enniskillen Royal Grammar School strives therefore to promote an ethos and culture where pupils feel safe and have a sense of belonging in a strong relational community focused on excellence, where they are challenged and supported in equal measure, and where good attendance and punctuality are expected, supported and celebrated. This Policy should be considered in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including those on Positive Behaviour, Addressing Bullying, Pastoral Care, Learning Support and Period Dignity.

### **Aims of this Policy**

- To maintain/improve the overall attendance of pupils at Enniskillen Royal Grammar School
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils
- To develop and maintain good relationships with external agencies, notably the Education Welfare Service.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Good attendance and punctuality are crucial to the effective delivery of the curriculum, the academic and social development of pupils and their successful transition to higher education and the world of work. They are increasingly seen

- by universities and employers as indicators of a young person's reliability and readiness for further study or work
- Good attendance and punctuality are core life skills that form part of the wider development of self-regulation, responsibility, and readiness to learn. Absence from class without a valid reason is regarded as unsatisfactory, and private study periods, link courses and all timetabled lessons are included in attendance records. Attendance and punctuality records are monitored regularly by pastoral staff and followed up with pupils and parents/carers. Attendance and punctuality information is also shared with parents/carers on a regular basis through reports and grade cards. All staff have a key role in maintaining a positive climate for learning and following agreed procedures for recording attendance accurately and promptly
  - High-quality teaching and a positive classroom climate are central to encouraging good attendance. Staff use engaging and adaptive learning strategies and work to remove barriers to attendance through our Understanding and Supporting Learners framework. We recognise that each pupil is an individual and may experience challenges that require specific responses and personalised interventions, including support from external agencies as appropriate
  - Parents/carers play a vital role in supporting good attendance. We engage with them regularly to promote the crucial importance of good attendance as highlighted in the Department of Education's materials such as Attendance Matters: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-attendance-matters-parents-guide>, Miss School=Miss Out: [https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Miss-School-Miss-Out-Ask-for-help-%20%28Post%20Primary%29\\_0.pdf](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Miss-School-Miss-Out-Ask-for-help-%20%28Post%20Primary%29_0.pdf) and Try and Stop Me <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/try-and-stop-me>
  - Pupils should be absent only when unavoidable, and all absences must be explained by the parent/carer
  - Effective communication between home and school is essential: the school maintains open lines of communication and staff work closely with parents/carers to identify and address any barriers to attendance, and to support pupils to self-regulate and re-engage effectively with school
  - Regular liaison is maintained with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and referrals are made where necessary. This partnership helps ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate guidance and support, and that statutory responsibilities regarding school attendance are met.

## **Role of the School**

In Enniskillen Royal Grammar School we believe that the promotion of good attendance is everyone's business. We seek to establish a positive culture of being missed and welcomed back after absence and of promoting reasons for good attendance and celebrating good attendance. Roles and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the school's attendance strategy are outlined in further detail in **Appendix 1**. The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance and works closely with the Senior Leadership Team and in particular with the Senior Teacher responsible for attendance, Mr Stephen Gaston, in the implementation, review and evaluation of the school's attendance policy and procedures.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing attendance targets and figures and ensuring that it is a standing agenda item under the Principal's report at each meeting.

It is the responsibility of every teacher in Enniskillen Royal Grammar School to register student attendance accurately in each class using the Schools Management System (SMS) Pupil safety and safeguarding are always paramount and, if staff have any doubts about a pupil absence, it must be reported in a timely fashion so that it can be followed up. AM registration is taken each morning at the beginning of period 1 and PM registration is taken at the beginning of period 7. Pupils are expected to be in school by 8.55 am. To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way the school adheres to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2025/09 which can be found at the following link <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/circular-202509-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-202526>

If a pupil arrives after 9am when lessons begin, they must sign in at the office and will be recorded as L. If the pupil arrives after 9.30 am they must sign in at the office and a written explanation on School Comms from their parents/carers is required to explain this absence. Lateness is recorded on the pupil's attendance record and is monitored regularly by Form Tutors, Heads of Year and Senior Leadership Team. Pupils with poor punctuality will be subjects to sanctions in line with school policy.

Pupil attendance records are monitored regularly by Form Tutors, Heads of Year, and the Senior Leadership Team in line with our **Attendance Procedures Appendix 2**.

## **Role of Parent/Carer**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. If a

child is registered in school, their parent/carer has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend school.

It is a parent's/ carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence either via telephone or on School Comms. A written note must always be provided on School Comms, no later than the day of the pupil's return to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with home learning or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with your child's tutor or Head of Year to ensure that both you and your child receive appropriate support.

### **Role of Pupils**

Pupils must attend school punctually and make good attendance at school a key target and priority in their learning. They should record their attendance in their school planner and follow the attendance procedures outlined therein consistently e.g signing in and out at reception if attending an appointment during the school day, signing in at reception if arriving late and asking parents/carers to provide absence notes via School Comms. If they are absent, they should ensure that they are proactive in catching up on missed work and home learning on their return to school.

### **Absence Procedures**

- If a pupil is absent due to illness or any other unavoidable reason the reason for absence must be submitted on the first day of absence by the parent/carer via telephone or via the Schoolcomms App. A written note must always be provided on School Comms, no later than the day of the pupil's return to school.
- Appointments should be arranged outside school hours whenever possible. If it is unavoidable and an appointment takes place during the school day, the following procedures will apply: -
- For any pupil requesting permission to attend an appointment, a parent/carer must submit the request through the Schoolcomms App no later than the morning of the day of the appointment.
- The pupil must sign out of school at the office before leaving school for the appointment and sign in upon return to school, when applicable
- Pupils may not leave the school grounds during the school day without permission

- Pupils who become ill during the school day should report to the school office, having been excused from class by the class teacher. Pupils are not permitted to contact their parents/carers nor leave school without permission.

### **Procedures for Monitoring and Managing Attendance**

Attendance is monitored and non-attendance is followed up in line with our **Attendance Procedures Appendix 2**. Our guiding principle is to celebrate good attendance as well as to identify any emerging patterns in relation to individual pupils or group of pupils and to take early pro-active steps to address any underlying issues and re-establish good attendance. In monitoring patterns of absence, we refer to the Department of Education Absence tiers (At risk -pupils who miss 1-2 days per month, Chronic-pupils who miss 2-3 days per month and Severe Chronic-pupils who miss 4+ days per month). In addressing attendance issues, we take a collaborative and holistic approach within school involving both pastoral and curricular teams to develop a bespoke pupil attendance action plan. Where appropriate we may also engage with external support agencies in a 'team around the child' approach. In the event of attendance falling below 85% a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered. The school will consult with the designated EWS Officer for the school and parents/carers will be informed. The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal duty to make sure that parents guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education. EWS will support staff and parents/carers in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

### **Holidays during Term-time**

Enniskillen Royal Grammar School discourages holidays during term-time because of the impact they can have on a pupil's academic progress. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Teachers will not provide work for pupils who are on holiday during term-time.

This policy will be kept under regular review.



## Appendix 1

### **Roles and Responsibilities in Implementing the Attendance Policy**

**“Promotion of good attendance is everyone’s business”**

#### **Senior Teacher Responsible for Attendance:**

1. Ensure monthly monitoring is completed by Heads of Year
2. Meet monthly with Heads of Year to discuss the attendance in their year group and the follow up actions required
3. Report on Attendance to SLT, including identified cohort of at risk/vulnerable pupils
4. Monitoring, evaluate and review Attendance Action Plan within the SDP.

#### **Deputy Senior Teachers:**

1. Monitor attendance and punctuality, identifying areas for improvement
2. Use attendance data to monitor progress, identify trends and ensure appropriate follow up actions are identified by the Head of Year
3. Work with designated admin staff to ensure that attendance registers are complete.

#### **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator will:**

1. Work alongside the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Year, Learning Support Assistants, Tutors, Teachers and parents/carers to provide advice and strategies to address SEND that impact positively on attendance.
2. Liaise with relevant outside agencies and make referrals to appropriate outside agencies, when necessary, e.g. Education Psychology Service.

#### **Learning Support Assistants will:**

1. Monitor the attendance of their pupil(s) on a daily basis.
2. Flag absence with Tutor, Head of Year and SENCO.
3. Inform Tutor, Head of Year and SENCO of any barriers to attendance or other relevant information

**Sixth Form Study Supervisor will:**

1. Register pupils promptly and accurately using SIMS lesson monitor for every study period.
2. Monitor the patterns of attendance and punctuality to Study of pupils on a daily basis.
3. Flag trends, patterns or any other concerns with the Head of Year and tutor.

**Heads of Year will:**

1. Monitor attendance and punctuality within their year group by running reports on:-
  - ✓ Monthly Attendance % including Tier of Absence
  - ✓ Lates
  - ✓ Unauthorised (unexplained) absences
  - ✓ Continuous absences of 3 or more days
2. Use the attendance data to monitor progress, identify trends and identify follow up actions for Tutors within a monthly report.
3. Set targets for improvement for pupils requiring intervention in their year group.
4. Maintain a brief record of follow-up actions such as contact with parents/carers through phone calls, Schoolcomms and meetings with HOY and tutors.
5. Maintain Attendance as a standing item on Team Meeting agendas
6. Use a variety of strategies to overcome poor attendance, lack of engagement and underachievement for pupils in their year as well as to promote, recognise and celebrate good attendance or improvement in attendance.
7. Work with Senior Teacher responsible for Attendance and Principal to make referrals to and work with outside agencies such as Education Welfare Service.
8. Support the integration of new pupils into their year groups eg by assigning a buddy.
9. Support the phased return or reintegration of pupils after extended periods of absence eg with a daily check-in.

**Form Tutors will:**

1. Monitor pupil attendance on a daily basis
2. Where a pupil is absent for a third consecutive day and no code has been provided, tutors will liaise with HoY and admin first to see if there has been any prior contact before contacting parents/carers to ascertain the reason. Contact with parents/carers can be either with a phone call or through Schoolcomms (3<sup>rd</sup> day contact pro forma)
3. Welcome and acknowledge return of any pupils who have been absent.
4. Keep a brief running record of pupil absence in respect of follow-up to pupil absence to include a record of contact with parents/carers
5. As directed by Head of Year follow up with pupils and parents/carers in relation to reasons for absence, with agreed interventions and putting supports in place when necessary.

6. Monitor the progress and identify attendance trends in their Tutor group.
7. Inform the Head of Year of attendance and/or punctuality concerns in their Tutor group.

**Curriculum Leaders will:**

1. Maintain Attendance as a standing item on Team Meeting agendas.
2. For subject specific attendance issues, in liaison with Class Teacher, identify appropriate follow up and support and inform Tutor, Head of Year and parents/carers.

**Staff will:**

1. Establish a culture of daily noticing, being missed and positive welcome back.
2. Make lessons feel 'valuable' where pupils don't want to miss them/perceive that they can simply do the work on their own at home.
3. All staff consistently reinforce the expectation of the presence and use of the Pupil Planner.
4. At 9am bell, take AM Register and save. Once saved, any late pupils sign in at Reception.
5. Register pupils promptly and accurately using the School's Management System (SMS) for every lesson. Pupils should only be registered as either present (/) or absent (N). When completing the register, as good practice, all pupils should be called by name.
6. Monitor the attendance of those in their subject class.
7. Raise concerns with Tutor and Head of Year about repeated absences from their lesson(s) and if they have no information, in liaison with CL, follow up with parents as necessary.
8. If attendance issue is subject specific, in liaison with the CL, agree follow up action.
9. Request permission from EA/PJB and consult with SJG and the School Calendar at the earliest opportunity, but no later than one week before, when planning to take pupils out of school. Staff must inform the administrative staff of the proposed trip/off-site activity at the earliest opportunity but no later than one week in advance of the trip. When the lists have been finalised, all identified staff (refer to *Educational Visits' Policy and Application Pack* in Google Classroom under *School Trips and Off-Site Activities*) should be informed at least 48 hours in advance of the trip. The names of pupils going out on the trip/off-site activity should be listed in alphabetical order with the Year Group clearly stated.

**Administrative staff will:**

1. For each day of absence, contact parents/carers using Schoolcomms after 9.30am for pupils absent for AM session without any reason provided (Absence after AM Register pro forma)
2. Complete daily checks to ensure AM and PM registers are complete and follow up with staff where there are missing marks.

3. Seek support from Deputy Senior Teachers where missing marks remain after AM or PM registers.
4. Liaise with Senior Leadership Team regarding completion of attendance for pupils with bespoke timetables, pupils offsite accessing subjects within Fermanagh Learning Community or other issues causing delayed registers and missing marks such as Games, Enrichment and Engineering.

**Parents/carers will:**

1. Inform school via Schoolcomms or by phonecall at least one day in advance of planned, known absence eg medical appointment.
2. Inform school via Schoolcomms or by phonecall before 9.30am on the first day of illness or unplanned absence and indicate if this is likely to be for more than one day.
3. Provide a written note on School Comms to explain the absence, no later than the day of the pupil's return to school
4. If the absence is prolonged, parents/carers should keep school updated.
5. Contact school with any concerns about their child's attendance or reluctance to attend school.

**Pupils will:**

1. Attend school punctually.
2. Follow procedures regarding tracking absence, asking parents/carers to provide absence notes on Schoolcomms, signing in at Reception if late, signing out of school if leaving and signing in again on return to school.
3. Ensure they are proactive in catching up on missed work and home learning
4. Have their planner on the desk in every lesson and use it to record home learning and track attendance.



## Appendix 2

### Attendance Procedures

These procedures sit within the key principles that underpin our Attendance Policy, namely:

- recognition of the link between good attendance and high-quality outcomes
- recognition of good attendance and punctuality as a core life skill within the disposition of self-regulation
- explicit and intentional development of a strong school community where pupils feel safe, have a sense of belonging and good attendance and punctuality are celebrated through, for example, the awarding of Bonus House Points.
- explicit and intentional development of a positive climate for learning within all classrooms with a focus on high quality teaching and learning which helps to foster pupil engagement and good attendance and punctuality.
- Reduction of barriers to attendance and punctuality within our Understanding and Supporting Learners strategy. There is an acceptance that every child is an individual who may at any point within the levels of the attendance procedures experience barriers to attendance which require specific responses and interventions.

1. As part of our progression within *Be Engaged* and *Be Kind*, these procedures form part of our responses to *Be Prepared*.
2. Within our relational learning approach, there is a focus on maintaining positive relationships and celebrating good attendance. If barriers to learning resulting from issues relating to attendance and punctuality arise, staff work closely with parents/carers in the identification of pro-active support strategies. Staff must both **relate** in order to **educate** and help pupils to **self-regulate** in order to **educate**.
3. All staff have a key role to play in developing the positive climate for learning and a range of teaching and learning strategies which engage the pupils and meet their needs. They are also responsible for ensuring that agreed attendance and punctuality procedures are followed. Classroom teachers are responsible for ensuring accurate and prompt completion of registers.
4. Curriculum Leaders and Heads of Year are responsible for knowing what is happening within their department and year group respectively. Curriculum Leaders should communicate regularly with their team about progress within teaching and learning and any areas of difficulty and/or pupils of concern in relation to attendance and punctuality should be flagged in regular meetings and noted in Departmental Records under Pupil Concerns, together with the action to be taken. Heads of Year should ensure that staff are kept up to date with pastoral information and should regularly monitor SIMs behaviour, attendance and punctuality data to identify any emerging patterns with relation to individual pupils or group of pupils in order to take early pro-active steps to address any underlying issues.
5. **These procedures reflect the school's policy to involve parents/carers in all its processes where it is appropriate to do so and to maintain at all times open lines of communication with them.**

Attendance is everyone's business and there is a positive culture of being missed and welcomed back after absence and of promoting reasons for good attendance and celebrating good attendance

Admin Staff	Tutor	Head of Year	SLT
<p><i>Admin staff monitor daily</i></p> <p><b>Each day of absence after AM reg closes at 9.30am</b> Has reason been provided? YES/NO <b>If YES, ACTION: code in SIMS</b> <b>If NO, ACTION: Send School Comms 1<sup>st</sup> day pro forma and copy in tutor and Head of Year</b></p> <p><b>ONGOING ACTION</b> Admin staff will inform SLT, HoY and Tutor of exceptional circumstances/reasons for absence</p> <p><b>Weekly Monitoring ACTION</b> follow up on remaining Unauthorised Unexplained Absences through Schoolcomms</p>	<p><i>Tutor monitors attendance daily</i></p> <p><b>Level 1: Greet on return, positive conversation to identify reason(s) for absence and possible barriers and ask if any further support is needed</b></p> <p><b>NO ACTION 1st day of absence monitor only</b> unless statemented pupil with a LSA, liaise with LSA or pupil is safeguarding concern, vulnerable and/or identified in cohort for attendance <b>tutor liaises with HoY</b></p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> day of absence monitor only</b></p> <p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence</b> <b>NO ACTION unless exceptional reason (eg bereavement, family upheaval, hospitalisation)</b> <b>ACTION: liaise with HoY re pastoral contact with home</b></p> <p><b>Weekly Monitoring to Identify trends/patterns</b> <b>ACTION</b> Where absences are chronic (repeated) and or acute (continued - such as prolonged illness) tutor liaises with Head of Year as to action</p> <p><b>Monthly ACTION</b> Follow up as directed by the Head of Year <b>Level 2: More targeted one to one conversation to identify reason(s) for absence and possible barriers to attendance and possible support(s) required</b></p> <p><b>Level 3: Phone call home or Schoolcomms communication with home</b> <b>ACTION</b> If pattern of attendance remains chronic or acute Tutor liaises with Head of Year who advises on follow up action(s)</p>	<p><b>Head of Year monitors attendance weekly and uses attendance data to produce a monthly report</b></p> <p>← Head of Year to advise on follow up action(s)</p> <p>← Head of Year to advise on follow up action(s)/contact with home</p> <p>← Head of Year to advise on follow up action(s)/contact with home</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> Monthly printing, interrogation of Attendance data Production of report identifying follow up action(s) to be taken which may include:</p> <p><b>Level 4: In school conversation between Head of Year and pupil</b></p> <p><b>Level 5: In school meeting with pupil and HoY and/or phonecall home</b></p>	<p>Senior Teacher has overall oversight of Attendance</p> <p>Site specific Senior Teachers to monitor attendance.</p> <p>SLT support admin staff in ensuring completion of Registers</p> <p>SLT available at all point for consultation</p>

		<p><b><u>HoY Monthly meeting with SLT</u></b> </p> <p><b>ACTION: If attendance remains chronic or acute HoY liaises with SLT</b></p> <p><b>Level 6: In school meeting with pupil and parent</b></p> <p><b>Level 7: In school meeting with HoY, SLT, parents and pupil</b></p> <p><b>If actions above have been exhausted, then liaise with SLT to consider:</b></p> <p><b>If attendance remains chronic and/or acute liaise with SLT</b></p>	<p><b>Monthly Review with HoYs and report to SLT</b></p> <p>Support options may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bespoke timetable</li> <li>• Reduction of subjects</li> <li>• Leaving class early</li> <li>• Safe spaces/time outs</li> <li>• School counselling</li> <li>• Involvement of outside agencies eg CAMHS</li> </ul> <p> <b>Individual Pupil Attendance Action Plan</b></p> <p> <b>Level 8: Referral to Education and Welfare Officer</b></p>
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