



## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Our aims for this policy are to ensure good attendance, discourage lateness and to ensure that a full record is kept of all absences. It is also for the school to be aware of all persons present on the school site at any one point in time.

The key principles which underpin this policy for managing attendance are that:

- Parents/carers whose children attend school have a duty to ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually in order to get the most benefit from their education
- Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to the academic and social development that will improve the life chances of learners
- Learners who attend school regularly and punctually are less likely to be at risk, both in terms of engaging in anti-social behaviour and in terms of their own wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Elizabeth College will work collaboratively with families and other agencies to address barriers to attendance

The policy will also ensure that registers are correctly kept and available for inspection by any appropriate body at any given time.

Where reasonably possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each student to provide the school with additional options to make contact with a responsible adult, particularly when a child, missing from education, is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

The Vice Principal (pastoral) will take on the role of Attendance Champion and will see that Elizabeth College works collaboratively with Elizabeth College Junior School, its local partners and families and ensure that:

- High standards of attendance are an expectation
- Data is monitored rigorously so that issues can be resolved at the earliest opportunity
- Parents and students are listened to and any barriers to attendance are understood
- Support is available as and when required
- Elizabeth College views poor attendance as a safeguarding concern and as such the safeguarding team will work alongside those members of the attendance team, in and outside of the college, to facilitate the staged approach to improving attendance
- Referral to external partners as and when required. For example, Schools Attendance Service (SAS), Children's Convenor and the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH)

### The Legal Framework

The College will have regard to UK statutory guidance - Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)

Section 17 of the Education (Guernsey) Law 1970 (the '1970 Law') places a legal duty on parents/carers of every child of compulsory school age (5-16) to ensure that they are receiving efficient full-time



education suitable to their age, aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by attendance at school or otherwise.

Under Section 20 of the 1970 Law, parents/carers who fail to secure their children's regular attendance (at school) shall be guilty of an offence and Education Services has a duty to take appropriate action by serving a School Attendance Order on the parent(s).

In accordance with the Learners' Registration (Guernsey) Regulations, 1970, it is a statutory requirement for schools to:

- Maintain school registers
- Accurately record the presence or absence of all learners at the commencement of each morning and afternoon session
- Make their registers available for inspection by Education Services

In addition, as part of being an accredited British School Overseas we are required to meet the following standard:

Leadership must ensure that the school's admission and attendance register is maintained in a manner which conforms to host country laws.

## **2. Registers**

- Registers are taken every morning from 08.25-08.30, and every afternoon from 13.35-14.20. These registration points will count for am and pm attendance.
- In addition to the above students are registered at each of the additional 6 lessons that they are due to attend during the day.

Late Arrival Registration takes place each day from 8.30 am. It is therefore essential that if a student arrives late, they sign in at Reception, so our systems remain fully updated. In case of an evacuation of the school, it is necessary that we know exactly where every student is at all times.

## **3. Leaving school early during the day**

Students are not normally permitted to leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture.

If a student has to leave the school during the day for illness or to attend a medical appointment, the administrative team will contact parents and sign the student 'out' prior to leaving the school site.

## **4. Notifying the school of illness**

If an occasion arises where a child is ill, the parent or carer must e-mail [office@elizabethcollege.gg](mailto:office@elizabethcollege.gg) or telephone 01481 721123 before 9:00 am each day. If the school has not heard from a parent or carer, we will telephone to enquire as to the child's whereabouts. We ask that parents/carers contact us each day their child is going to be absent to ensure we keep records updated and so that the school can keep abreast of their progress towards a return to full health and their anticipated return date.



## 5. Requesting Absence

If you wish to request an absence for any planned appointment or event, you should make the request in writing via email and send it to [office@elizabethcollege.gg](mailto:office@elizabethcollege.gg) marked 'absence request'. Absence during term time is discouraged.

## 6. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as a satisfactory explanation for absence. Parents may not authorise absence; only schools can do this.

The main areas where the school will **authorise absence** are given below:

- **Illness** - where schools accept that a pupil is ill, they must authorise the absence but can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.
- **Appointments dental and medical appointments** - authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made for a time outside of school hours.
- **Religious observance** - the school will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school may seek confirmation from that religious body that the day has been set apart for religious observance.
- **Other** - to spend time pursuing an area of interest not organised by the school. For example:
  - Sport (including dance)- to represent the island.
  - Academic - University visits, school taster visits.
  - Arts - drama, art and music that complement and enhance studies.

### Exceptional Circumstances/Unavoidable Causes

Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

The following are not routinely considered an exceptional circumstance:

- birthdays
- holidays
- days out as a special treat
- other family celebrations

In these or similar situations we would ask you to complete and sign our Leave of Absence Form. This asks you to formally acknowledge that the absence is unauthorised for record keeping purposes. It also clarifies that work will not be routinely set and that absence from school could have an impact upon academic progress.

## 7. Poor attendance

The College has high expectations regarding attendance. If attendance falls below 95% in any six-month period, we will follow the actions in the table below:



Stage 1 100%- 96.1%	Stage 2 96%-94%	Stage 3 93.9%-90	Stage 4 89.9%-85%	Stage 5 85>
Continue to monitor	Tutors to speak to students raising concerns regarding their attendance and to explain the next steps should improvements not be made	Head of Year to send an email to parents	Attendance meeting setting short term targets and signposting parents to the SAS.  Progress needs a follow up meeting in 4 weeks to review and evidence	Flag and refer to SAS. There must be evidence of stages 1 to 4 prior to referral.

\* There may be authorised reasons for absence that will not require these staged actions, but the reasons and actions should still be recorded.

If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the school will contact Schools Attendance Service (SAS) and this ultimately could lead to a review of the ability of the child to continue to be registered at Elizabeth College.

## 8. Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities

The school's attendance register is summarised weekly and stored electronically. It is backed up, in the form of an electronic copy, at least once a month and records are retained for three years after the end of the school year in question. Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. The school may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. The College will alert their local authority after a pupil/student of compulsory school age has:

- been absent without notification for 5 consecutive school days, or
- failed to attend school regularly, or
- been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing



## Appendix 1: Register Codes

EC CODE	DESCRIPTION	STATISTICAL MEANING	STATES OF GUERNSEY CODES	STATISTICAL MEANING
<b>Present at school codes</b>				
/	Present (for morning session)	Present	/	Present - AM
\	Present (for afternoon session)	Present	\	Present- PM
<b>Number</b>	<b>Late (number of minutes late)</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Late arrival before the register is closed</b>
	<b>Late After the register has closed</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Late, after the register has closed</b>
<b>Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity Codes</b>				
V	Educational visit	Approved educational activity (counts as present)	V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational activity (counts as present)	P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
S	Study Leave		S	Study Leave
B	Educated off site	Approved Educational Activity (counts as present)	B	Attending any other approved educational activity
			<b>D</b>	<b>Time Out or internal exclusion</b>
<b>Absent - leave of Absence</b>				
<b>H</b>	<b>Holiday Agreed</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>	<b>S</b>	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
M	Medical or dental appt	Authorised absence	<b>M</b>	<b>Illness or dental treatment</b>
<b>D</b>		<b>Dual-registered at another school?</b>		
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence	C	Other authorised circumstances



<b>Absent - Other Authorised Reasons</b>				
			<b>G</b>	<b>Special Circumstances (sent home)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>		<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Illness</b>	<b>Authorised absence</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Excluded</b>	Authorised absence	<b>E</b>	<b>Excluded</b>
<b>Absent - unauthorised absence</b>				
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised absence	<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established
<b>G</b>	<b>Holiday during term time</b>	Unauthorised absence	<b>H</b>	<b>Holiday not granted by the school</b>
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised circumstances	Unauthorised absence	<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence
<b>Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>				
<b>X</b>	Attendance not required	Attendance not required—not counted in possible attendances	<b>X</b>	Attendance not required
<b>Y</b>	Enforced school closure	Attendance not required—not counted in possible attendances	Enforced school closure	Attendance not required—not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to all learners	Attendance not required—not counted in possible attendances	<b>#</b>	Planned whole school closure



## Appendix 2: Exemplar Letters

Dear

### **Absence from School**

I am pleased to see that your son/daughter, (*name*), has returned to school following a period of absence. However, the school has not received from you an explanation for (*name's*) recent absence.

It is a legal requirement that the school maintains accurate records regarding student attendance and, in particular, the reasons for any absence. Such records contribute to the process of promoting regular school attendance among learners.

I should, therefore, be grateful if you would contact the school at your earliest convenience with the reason for (*name's*) recent absence from school.

Thank you for your support

Yours sincerely



## Letters for Punctuality

Dear

### Punctuality at School

I wish to express concern regarding your child, *(name's)* punctuality at *(name)* School. Our attendance records show that since *(date)*, *(name)* has arrived late for school on *(number)* occasions.

I would like to emphasise the importance of students arriving punctually at school for both morning and afternoon sessions. This ensures that they are aware of important information at the beginning of each session, and it avoids disruption of the learning of others.

Your support with this is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

**OR**

Dear

### Punctuality at School

I wish to express concern regarding your child, *(name's)* punctuality at *(name)* School. Our attendance records show that since *(date)*, *(name)* has arrived late for school on *(number)* occasions.

I would like to emphasise the importance of students arriving punctually at school for both morning and afternoon sessions. This ensures that they are aware of important information at the beginning of each session, and it avoids disruption to the learning of others. Additionally, late arrival at school (after registration) may contravene Section 20 of The Education (Guernsey) Law, 1970 regarding regular school attendance.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this further Tel: *(number)* email: *(email address)*

Yours sincerely



## Letters for Illness/Medical Reasons

Dear

### Absence from School – Illness

I am grateful to you for notifying the school of your son/daughter, (*name(s)*) ill health, which has been responsible for his/her recent absences from school. These absences have been recorded as 'authorised' in the school attendance register. However, in order to continue recording (*name's*) absences as 'authorised', the school requires confirmation of (*name's*) continuing ill health from a medical practitioner.

I would be grateful if you could provide us with a letter or medical certificate from your family medical practitioner regarding (*name's*) current health.

If you wish to discuss this matter with a member of staff, please would you ask for (*name*).

Yours sincerely

**OR**

Dear

### Absence from School

Following our previous correspondence, you will be aware that your son/daughter, (*name's*) record of school attendance during the (*name*) term (*year*), has given cause for concern. During this period (*name*) attended school for (*number*) out of a possible (*number*) sessions, thereby achieving (*number*)% attendance.

It is not entirely clear whether (*name's*) absences from school can all be attributed to ill health. Should ill health be responsible for all or part of (*name's*) absences from school please provide us with evidence of this via medical certificates or a letter from your family doctor.

Should (*name's*) attendance record continue to give cause for concern, in the absence of medical certificates or a letter from your family doctor, it will be necessary for the school to determine what further action should be taken by both the school and the school's attendance service.

Should you wish to discuss this with a member of staff please contact the school and ask for (*name*).

Yours sincerely



## Letters for 95% and 90% Attendance

Dear

### Attendance at School

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your child's attendance has raised some concerns. At present, your child's attendance for the current school year is (*number*)%.

Our expectation is that all students will achieve an attendance percentage of at least 95%. Students who do not regularly attend will inevitably fall behind in their learning. Regular attendance is crucial, particularly at this stage in your child's education.

I understand that there may be good reasons for your child's absence which we may not be fully aware of. If your child is experiencing any issues related to school that may be affecting their attendance, please call me on (*number*) or email me on (*email*). This will enable us to support your child appropriately and to ensure they have positive experiences whilst they are at school.

Please get in touch if you wish to discuss this or require any further information.

Please find enclosed a copy of your child's attendance certificate for your information.

Yours sincerely

**OR**



Dear

## **Attendance at School**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your child's attendance was (*number*) % last half term and is currently (*number*) % for this academic year. Any child whose attendance falls below 90%, for whatever reason, including sickness absence and holidays becomes a cause for concern.

We understand that most parents and carers usually inform the school of any absences, but it is our duty to let you know whenever your child's absence falls below an acceptable level. If you are experiencing any difficulties and attendance is becoming a problem, please contact us as there are many ways in which we can provide support and help.

All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually. If there is no improvement in attendance, a referral may be made to the School Attendance Officer (SAO) concerns list. In extreme circumstances legal proceedings may be entered into.

As you know, frequent absences have a serious effect on educational progress. If your child is ill, please continue to inform the school on the first morning of absence. Please also remember that you must leave a reason for the absence, including the nature of your child's illness. In cases where there are frequent absences due to illness, we may ask you to provide medical evidence from your GP, to be able to authorise the absence. Please get in touch with (*name*) if you have concerns about your child's health impacting their attendance so that we can discuss the ways we can support.

Please find enclosed a copy of your child's attendance certificate for this year and last. Thank you

for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



## Appendix 3: Notification of Leave of Absence for Holiday



### Notification by Parent/Carer of Leave of Absence for Holiday During Term Time

*If a parent or carer intends to take their child out of school during term time to go on a holiday, for safeguarding reasons, they should complete the form at the bottom of the page.*

Elizabeth College seeks to provide high standards and high expectations for all to enable learners to realise their full potential.

Although Guernsey law does not preclude term time holidays, they are not a right. Absence for holiday negatively impacts a child's attendance at school and, as such, Elizabeth College does not approve of them.

It is, therefore, the position of Elizabeth College that holidays in term time will not be authorised.

For safeguarding reasons, it is important that schools are aware of a child's whereabouts during term-time. Therefore, if parents/carers do intend to arrange for their child to have holiday in term time, they should inform the Principal [principal@elizabethcollege.gg](mailto:principal@elizabethcollege.gg) of their intention and the dates of the holiday by completing the form below and returning it the school no less than two weeks before the date the period of absence is intended to start.

I am notifying you that (name of child):  will be taking leave of absence from Elizabeth College from (date):  to (date):  in order to take part in a holiday.

**I understand that this absence will not be authorised by the school and will impact my child's attendance figure for the year.**

Signature of parent/carers:  Date: