



Policy
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Attendance Policy
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Deputy Head Pastoral

Attendance Policy

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1. Policy Statement

For students to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the School, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality. Ineffective registration or poorly executed follow-up procedures can increase the risks of truancy and educational under-performance, which can negatively affect personal and social development among students. Poor attendance and/ or a child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or in itself may indicate that a student is at risk of harm. Consequently, attendance and registration arrangements are hugely important and must be seen to be regarded as such by students, parents and staff.

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of their educational opportunities through maximum attendance, and are expected to attend all prescribed lessons and activities. Parents and teachers have a duty to ensure that students attend school for every school day except in the case of illness or if prior permission for absence has been granted.

2. Aims

This policy aims to provide a clear, consistent and cohesive framework which conforms with statutory requirements and promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality of students at the School, as well as outlining clear procedures for identifying and addressing situations where students fail to attend regularly or punctually, or go missing, so that:

1. Procedures and lines of responsibility within the School are clear regarding:
 - Attendance and Registration
 - Authorisation and Clearance of Absence and Lateness
 - How sanctions are used to reinforce expectations of attendance and punctuality
 - How and when to report concerns, including identifying and addressing any situation where a student goes missing from School
2. Staff, parents and students are aware of, understand and can readily comply with statutory regulations and School rules governing attendance.
3. Absences and instances of lateness are identified and recorded systematically and accurately, and followed up quickly and appropriately in ways that promote high levels of attendance and punctuality.

3. Government Guidance

The Government have issued new guidance governing school attendance which is summarised in [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) Sept 2022, published by the Department for Education (DfE). Although this guidance is not yet statutory, the Secretary of State has committed to this guidance becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows (this will be no sooner than September 2023). The School also complies with guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by the Croydon Local Education Authority (LEA), regarding school attendance, which can be found by following this link: www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/attendance.

4. Responsibilities of parents

Parents with a child of compulsory school age have a legal duty to make sure that their child receives effective full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability (and to any special education needs they may have). Children must legally be in education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16. Students must stay in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday.

Parents are responsible for informing the School on any occasion when their daughter is unable to attend due to illness, a medical appointment or a university visit, providing the reason for non-attendance. This should be done by contacting the School by phone on 0208 688 2027 and selecting Preparatory or Senior School or at the Senior School they can also contact the Pastoral Assistant by email on SeniorsAbsence@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk. Requests for planned absence should happen as far in advance as possible, and unplanned absences (eg due to illness) should be registered **at the very latest by 8.00am on the morning of the absence**. Parents must make contact **each day** their daughter is to be absent from School.

Parents wishing to take their daughter out of School for exceptional reasons (such as attending a funeral or wedding, religious observance, elective surgery, or involvement in a regional or national extracurricular competition) must seek authorisation for the absence from the School by writing to the Head's PA, Jane Thomas JThomas@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk (copying in their daughter's Head of Year) in advance of the proposed date(s) of absence. The Head, in consultation with the relevant Head of Year, will confirm whether the circumstances meet the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence may be granted by the School. At Preparatory, parents should contact the Head of Preparatory Jodene Panteli.

Parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or otherwise. Prosecution could result in a fine of up to £2,500, a jail sentence of up to three months or a community sentence. Alternatively, LEA Education Welfare Officers, Police Officers and head teachers have the authority to issue penalty notices to parents of between £50 and £100.

Where parents need support to prevent their child from truanting or habitually arriving late, the School will meet with the parents and give advice. We expect that the parent will agree to comply with certain requirements in order to make the best use of this support.

Where parents fail to ensure regular attendance, do not engage with support services or work with the school to resolve attendance or punctuality problems, a parenting order may be requested by the LA or imposed by Magistrates. This is not a voluntary agreement and requires that parents attend parenting classes for a maximum period of up to 12 weeks. The order may be given for a period of up to 12 months and would require parents to have regular contact with a supervising officer – usually the Education Welfare Officer.

5. Responsibilities of students

Students have a responsibility to attend school when they are fit and well, and to arrive at School in time for registration each day during term time.

In the Sixth Form, there is a separate process for Open Day visits. This involves requesting permission for the absence via the Head of Sixth Form. The student's parents must also advise the Pastoral Assistant of the planned absence using the contact details above. A student will be allowed a maximum of 3 days absence during term time for Open Day visits.

If, for any reason, Reception to Year 11 student needs to leave the School site during the School day, their parents must have informed the School of the reason for the absence (if medical etc) or request permission from the Head if other circumstance. Preparatory students need to be collected from the School Office while Senior School students must sign out at the school office before leaving the site.

Failure to attend school regularly or punctually, failing to attend registration without good reason or leaving the School without permission constitutes a breach of the School's Behaviour Policy and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Students must remain on school premises from morning registration to the end of the last afternoon lesson unless they have a sanctioned absence, which has been granted by the Head, Head of Preparatory, Head of Year, Pastoral Leader or Deputy Head Pastoral, with the exception of Sixth Form students who have no afternoon lessons or after-school commitments; they may go provided they follow proper signing out procedures.

Students in certain year groups may be granted study leave during periods of public and internal/ mock examinations.

6. Responsibilities of the School

The School has a legal responsibility for taking and maintaining an accurate School Register (SR) of all students in Year 11 and below twice each day throughout term time. At Old Palace this happens once at the beginning of the morning registration once at the beginning of the afternoon session (period 5). Every entry in the SR must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made. Likewise, a back-up copy of the SR will be retained for three years.

The School will inform the LA of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission. The School will inform the LA of any absences that cause concern to the DSL.

The School will also inform the relevant LA and/or Children's Social Care (CSC), as appropriate, immediately if:

- A single absence raises child protection concerns (see the Missing Student Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy);
- A student in Year 11 or below has ten consecutive days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence);
- A student of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the school register when the next school is not known, when the family is moving abroad or if the child is to be home-schooled. The School is required to report these circumstances as soon as possible after the grounds for deletion are met, to the LA in which the student lives and in any event before the student's name is deleted from the register.

When a student leaves Old Palace for any reason, Croydon is informed by the completion of their 'Pupil Migration Form' in the week that the young person is taken off roll.

7. Registration Procedure

The Tutors of students have primary responsibility for registering their tutees in the morning and afternoon for Reception - Year 9 and morning for Years 10-13, and following up absenteeism and lateness. Tutors will take the attendance register at the start of each session of each school day during the Morning Registration Period (MRP). A second attendance register will be taken for students in Reception to Year 9.

7.1 Morning Registration

- Students should be at school by 8.15am, so that they are present for registration at 8.25am in their Form Room.
- Tutors must register students using iSAMS. In case of technical problems precluding the use of iSAMS, Tutors should email or otherwise send a list of absentees to the Pastoral Assistant.
- Students must not be registered present unless they are seen by the Tutor during the MRP.
- Only where a Tutor/School Office/Pastoral Assistant has received communication about a student's

- absence should the absence be categorised using the school's registration codes.
- Students who have music lessons during registration will be pre-registered by the school office.
- Students arriving at School after 8.25am should sign in at Reception to get a late mark.
- The Pastoral Assistant will generate a list of absent students from ISAMS. She will then contact the Period 1 classrooms of students on that list to check whether they are present, and then telephone the parents of those who appear to be absent and speak to the parents (if they answer) and update the registers accordingly. If the parents do not answer, a voicemail will be left and an email sent regarding the student's absence, asking for information from the parent.
- If the parents believe their child to be in school or if there is still no confirmation of the reason for a student not being registered by 11.30am, the Pastoral Assistant will inform the Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL) and the Pastoral Leader (DDSL), who will discuss whether to invoke the Missing Student Policy. At Preparatory the Administrative Assistant will inform the Head of Preparatory.

7.2 During Lessons

Teachers should register students on ISAMS at the start of each lesson and notify the Pastoral Assistant if a student who has been marked present in previous lessons, is absent.

7.3 Afternoon Registration

Preparatory pupils will be registered in the afternoon by their class teacher. Years 7-9 should return to Form Rooms for afternoon registration immediately after the end of Period 5 at 3.40, where Tutors will register students on ISAMS. Years 10-13 are registered in P5 and do not have afternoon registration in form rooms. In case of technical problems precluding the use of ISAMS, Tutors should email or otherwise send a list of absentees to the Pastoral Assistant.

If a student who was present in lessons during the day does not appear at afternoon registration, and the tutor has not been informed of a reason for this, he/she should contact the Pastoral Assistant to report this.

8. Procedures for Clearing Absences and Lates

The Pastoral Assistant/ Administrative Assistant (Prep) should follow up any absences promptly to:

- Ascertain the reason for an absence being recorded;
- Identify whether or not an absence is authorised;
- Carefully consider whether the absence gives rise to a safeguarding concern and, if so, contact the Deputy Head, Pastoral (DSL) and Head of Prep

In particular, if the Pastoral Assistant is not convinced about an explanation of illness provided to excuse absence, she should discuss it with the relevant Head of Year, who may request that parents provide medical evidence to confirm the illness.

9. Procedures for lateness or failure to register

9.1 Late arrivals

- All students are expected to be present for registration by their Tutor in their Form Room at 8:25am.
- Students arriving after 8:25am should sign in at Reception where they will be marked 'Late'.

9.2 Sanctions for lateness and failure to register

In the Senior School, tutors should monitor lateness and issue a lunchtime detention for 3 lates in a half term and an after-school detention for 6 lates in a half term. Heads of Year will also monitor lateness.

10. Responsibilities for Monitoring Attendance

10.1 Tutors

The Tutors of students have primary responsibility for registering their tutees in the morning and afternoon and following up absenteeism and lateness. Tutors will take the attendance register at the start of each session of each school day during the Morning Registration Period (MRP). A second attendance register will be taken for Reception to Year 9. For Year 10-13 the second attendance register is taken during period 5.

Tutors must identify the code to be entered in the School Register. **The codes are listed in Appendix A of this policy.**

Tutors can authorise:

- Orthodontist / dental / medical appointments. Notification of these appointments is normally sent by parents to the Pastoral Assistant who will enter them on ISAMS.

Tutors cannot authorise:

- Whole day student absence
- Absences for more than one day
- Requests to leave early for social or leisure reasons (e.g. holidays, pets, birthdays)

Each week tutors should look back over uncleared absences to date.

- Tutors should discuss each absence with the tutee and seek confirmation of clearance from parents or colleagues for the absence as necessary.
- Absence must not be cleared without contact with parents or colleagues to confirm the reason.
- Tutors must act to clear all absences within two weeks.
- Tutors should report any worrying patterns of absence to the Head of Year or Head of Preparatory. This would include frequent absences, an extended period of absence (more than 5 days) and regular absences (eg many Tuesdays)
- Tutors should monitor lateness in their form group and speak to the student about strategies for addressing this and then report any worrying patterns to the Head of Year and issue the relevant detentions.

10.2 Pastoral Assistant (Seniors) & Administrative Assistant (Prep)

The role is as follows:

- Maintain the school's absence and lateness records accurately
- Contact parents of all students about whom there has been no parental confirmation of absence, but who are registered as '**Not present**' during the MRP, after checking they are not present in lessons and update the registers accordingly.
- Where no contact is received from parents, inform the Deputy Head Pastoral, Pastoral Leader or Head of Year, depending on the circumstance.

10.3 Deputy Head Pastoral (Designated Safeguarding Lead) & Head of Prep (DDSL)

- Contact the relevant local authority with any concerns about any student's attendance and in any case where a student has ten consecutive days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness, confirmed by medical evidence);
- Contact children's social care services where:
 - A single absence or repeated absences raise safeguarding or child protection concerns (see the Missing Student Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy);
 - A student of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the school register when the next school is not known, the family is moving abroad, or the child is to be home-schooled.
 - Oversee the reporting of leavers to Croydon through the Pupil Migration Form system.
 - Inform the Pastoral Assistant and other key staff in advance of absence due to exclusion from school
 - Follow up with teachers and/or tutors who occasionally fail to complete registers during the Registration Periods

10.4 Head of Years

- Investigate and follow up any apparent patterns of absence or persistent or unauthorised absence and lateness. Take appropriate action (including sanctions and contact with home) and report any ongoing concerns to the Deputy Head Pastoral;
- In particular, if Tutors are not convinced about medical absence, then Head of Years should assist in seeking clarification with the parents and/or medical professionals.
- Refer requests for absence in exceptional circumstances to the Head. This may only be done in advance and with the number of days specified.
- Follow up with Tutors absences not cleared after two weeks and, where necessary, contact parents.

11. Addressing Persistent or Severe Absence

Where absence or a pattern of absence appears to be at risk of becoming problematic, the school will meet with the parents to discuss how to support the pupil and remove barriers to attendance where possible. This may include referrals to external services and other organisations. These actions will be regularly reviewed, and stepped up if there is no improvement to the situation. Where a whole family response is appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment. Ultimately if voluntary support is not effective the school will work with the local authority to put more formal measures in place. Persistent or severe absence is always treated as a safeguarding risk.

11.1 Persistent or Severe Absence of pupils with Individual needs

Whilst good attendance is an expectation for all pupils at the school, we recognise that this may be more of a challenge for some pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, or those suffering from long term medical conditions or mental health issues. The school will allow for these circumstances when working with such pupils and their parents, and will develop individualised support approaches that meet their specific needs where appropriate.

11.2 Supporting Students to Return to School

Sometimes a pupil who has been absent for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances the school will work with the pupil and parents to support reintegration.

iSAMS Registration Codes September 2023

Reminders:

Only mark present pupils that you have seen or about whom you have information from a member of staff. For other categories (ie reason for absence) please do not rely on the word of other students; use information from staff or parents instead.

Category	Code	Old Palace Descriptor (visible on iSAMS)	Most likely user(s)	When to use / permissions needed / other information
Present	/	am present	Tutor	
	\	pm present	Tutor	
	L	Late before register closes	Tutor/School Office	After 8.25am
	Q	Present	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	Present but in a music/speech & drama lesson, seeing Counsellor, or any other activity in school but not in lesson
	K	Working in isolation	Pastoral Admin Assistant	Confirmation from Deputy Head Pastoral, Pastoral Leader
Present but offsite	P	Sporting activity	School Office / PE Assistant	Sports fixture or tournament
	V	Educational visit or trip	School Office	
Authorised absence	C	Leave of absence (eg funeral, university visit, interview, work ex)	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	Communication from parent required Permission needed: HoY
	E	Excluded / suspended from school	Pastoral Admin Assistant	Confirmation from Deputy Head Pastoral
	H	Holiday authorised by school	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	Communication from parent required Permission needed: Head
	I	Illness (not medical appointment)	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	Communication from parent or school nurse required
	M	Medical or dental appointment	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	Communication from parent required
	R	Religious observance	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	Communication from parent required
	S	Study Leave	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	For Y11 and Sixth Form mock exams and public exams
Unauthorised absence	N	No reason provided	Tutor	
	G	Holiday not authorised by school	HOY / Head of Section	Check with Head

	0	Unauthorised absence	School Office / Pastoral Admin Assistant	Check with HoY
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