



## Attendance Policy

### Ermysted's Grammar School

This policy was ratified on behalf of the Governors of Ermysted's Grammar School (the 'School') on **11 June 2026**.

### Background

Recognising that pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education is central to raising standards and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can present a safeguarding concern.

The government has published research on the [link between attendance and attainment](#)<sup>1</sup> and the [impact of school absence on lifetime earnings](#)<sup>2</sup>. It shows that attendance *strongly* predicts outcomes and future prosperity.

Even a few days absence has a material effect on attainment. The research also shows that attendance patterns are hard to change once they have become established: the majority of pupils with poor attendance in Year 10, for example, *also* have poor attendance in Year 11.

Our own school data shows that pupils with 85% attendance typically achieve **one grade lower** in **every** GCSE subject compared to those with 95% attendance. This is understandable: missing nearly a day of school every week adds up quickly.

The message is simple - **Every day at school counts**.

### Introduction

This policy has been written in light of Department for Education (DfE) advice on school attendance<sup>3</sup>, and the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

- **Schools and local authorities** are expected to:
  - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
  - ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - act early to address patterns of absence.
- **Parents** are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- **Pupils** are expected to arrive punctually to their school and to their lessons.

For the purpose of this document, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

The member of staff responsible for the School's approach to attendance is **Mr A Jackson**, Deputy Headteacher, and **Ms M Needham** is the Attendance Officer.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/link-between-attendance-and-attainment>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-impact-of-school-absence-on-lifetime-earnings>

<sup>3</sup> [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, March 2024)

## Attendance at School

Pupils may enter the school site from **8:30 am** and must vacate the site by **4:00 pm** each day. Outside of these times there is no supervision available; therefore, unless the child is involved in an authorised school activity, the school cannot accept responsibility for their care beyond the school day.

## Registration and lateness procedures

A registration system is in place to record attendance, lateness and absences.

- Each school day is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon, each registered separately. Punctual arrival at both sessions is essential.
- When a pupil fails to attend school for one or more sessions, this will be recorded as an absence. Absences will be shown as authorised or unauthorised. The School determines whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised (see below).
- Morning registration occurs at **8:50 am**, at the start of the first lesson. Pupils should be at their classrooms punctually for this time.
- Afternoon registration occurs at
  - **12:20 pm** for pupils in Years 9, 11 and 13, and at
  - **1:05 pm** for pupils in Years 7, 8, 10 and 12.
- The School bell will sound at 8:50 am to indicate the start of the school day and the gates will be closed. Any pupil arriving after the bell has been sounded will need to gain entry via the intercom at the main school entrance.
- Pupils arriving **after 8:50 am but before 8:55 am** will be marked late by staff. If a pupil accrues **three** late marks, they will be placed in detention. Parents and pupils will be informed of this via the Parents' App (Arbor). A pupil will receive another detention for every 3 late marks thereafter. Late marks are reset each half term. Pupils who are late due to circumstances beyond their control – for example, delayed public transport, extreme weather, or unusual traffic situations – will receive a late mark on the register but this will **not** be recorded as a negative on the Parents' App (Arbor) and no sanction will be imposed.
- Pupils arriving **after 8:55 am** must report to the School Office to sign the late sheet. Patterns of absence will be monitored and pupils who are regularly late to school without good reason will receive interventions from staff and may face additional sanctions.
- At **9:20 am** the registers will be closed.
- Any pupil arriving **after 9:20 am** will remain marked as **an unauthorised absence** in the school register, unless and until parents email [absence@ermysteds.uk](mailto:absence@ermysteds.uk) to explain to the school's satisfaction the reason for their child's late arrival.
- When pupils are unaccounted for, the School will email parents then telephone each in turn to ensure all absences are explained. In the interests of expediency, parents are encouraged to respond to the email as soon as it has been received.
- Pupils will be registered by subject staff at the start of each lesson during the day. Any unexplained absences should be reported following the **Missing Pupil Procedure** (see [Appendix 1](#))

## Absence from school

Parents are legally obliged to ensure that their child attends school for each session (morning and afternoon) during the prescribed school days of the academic year, unless there is illness or some other acceptable reason for absence.

- All absence relating to illness must be explained **by email from the parent**. This should be sent to the Attendance Officer (via [absence@ermysteds.uk](mailto:absence@ermysteds.uk)) on the **first** and, for safeguarding reasons, **every subsequent** day of absence due to illness, by **9:00 am**.
- Pupils must catch up on any missed work. On their return to school, they should speak to the teachers of each affected subject for guidance. For pupils returning from a significant absence of more than five days, a meeting will be arranged with a member of the pastoral staff to coordinate a plan to catch up on missed work.
- Please note that a child who has been given antibiotics should be kept away from school for the first 48 hours of treatment. A child who has been sick or who has diarrhoea should also be kept away from school until the child has been clear of the problem for 48 hours. See additional guidance [here](#)<sup>4</sup> and [here](#)<sup>5</sup>.
- If, after **five school days** (ten sessions) from the start of a pupil's absence, there has been no letter or email to explain the absence, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, and further action will be taken to ascertain the whereabouts and wellbeing of the pupil. Where a pupil's attendance causes serious concern, the School will follow Departmental guidance on sharing information with external agencies (see *Persistent and Severe Absence* below).
- Punctuality and attendance data for individual pupils are recorded in their school report. High rates of attendance at school are recognised and celebrated each term.
- For parents seeking authorisation for a proposed absence, they should complete an **Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time** (see Appendix 2. This form is available on the school website).

## Long term absence due to illness

Occasionally, pupils experience health or other difficulties that prevent them from attending school for some time. The School will deal with each case individually, meeting with the pupil and their family to support them during the absence and agreeing procedures for the pupil's eventual return to school.

## Persistent and Severe Absence

Attendance data and the punctuality of pupils is closely monitored at the school and regularly reviewed by school leaders and governors.

- Attendance below 90% is defined by the Department of Education as **persistent absence** (no distinction is drawn between authorised and unauthorised absence)
- Attendance below 50% is defined as **severe absence**.

Recognising that attendance at the School is better than the national average, the School operates an *internal* monitoring threshold of **95% attendance**, calculated over a trailing six-month period. Attendance falling below our internal threshold or persistent lateness, without a medical or other satisfactory explanation, will be a serious concern and remedial action will be initiated by the pupil's tutor and Head of Year.

The **Heads of Year** are:

- |                              |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| • Mr A Jackson               | Deputy Headteacher (DSL <sup>6</sup> )    | <a href="mailto:ajackson@ermysteds.uk">ajackson@ermysteds.uk</a>                 |
| • Ms R Jackson / Ms P Hofman | Head of Year 7 (PH is DDSL <sup>7</sup> ) | <a href="mailto:rjackson@phofman@ermysteds.uk">rjackson@phofman@ermysteds.uk</a> |
| • Ms S Evans                 | Head of Year 8                            | <a href="mailto:sevans@ermysteds.uk">sevans@ermysteds.uk</a>                     |

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<sup>4</sup> <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/03/a-parents-guide-to-keeping-kids-healthy-this-school-year/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

<sup>6</sup> Designated Safeguarding Lead

<sup>7</sup> Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Mr M Halladay Head of Year 9 [mhalladay@ermysteds.uk](mailto:mhalladay@ermysteds.uk)
- Mr B Weaving Head of Year 10 [bweaving@ermysteds.uk](mailto:bweaving@ermysteds.uk)
- Mr A Allen Head of Year 11 [aallen@ermysteds.uk](mailto:aallen@ermysteds.uk)
- Mr G Barrett Head of Sixth Form (DDSL) [gbarrett@ermysteds.uk](mailto:gbarrett@ermysteds.uk)
- Ms A-M Herring Head of Year 12 [amherring@ermysteds.uk](mailto:amherring@ermysteds.uk)
- Mr T Hodgson Head of Year 13 [thodgson@ermysteds.uk](mailto:thodgson@ermysteds.uk)

The SENDCo is:

- Ms P Hofman SENDCo [sendco@ermysteds.uk](mailto:sendco@ermysteds.uk)

Parents will be alerted to the school's concerns and asked to discuss the situation with their son to improve his attendance or persistent lateness. The School will always consider the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance, but action will be taken to target and improve attendance and/or punctuality where it has been identified as a concern. If a pupil is persistently absent and the School's efforts to affect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the relevant agencies.

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the Local Authority<sup>8</sup> may take forward attendance legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance. This may include use of parenting contracts and education supervision orders or the issuing of fixed penalty notice or other sanctions to parents. Current [guidance](#)<sup>9</sup> states that '*all state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches **the national threshold** for considering a penalty notice.*'

The guidance goes on to clarify that '***the threshold is 10 sessions<sup>10</sup> of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.** A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).*'

#### Returning from an extended absence

The School will arrange a meeting with the returning pupil and their parent(s) to agree a strategy to reintegrate the pupil quickly back into lessons and discuss steps that could be taken to reduce the likelihood of future absences. The meeting may include a discussion on any work that is required help the pupil to catch up on missed learning and a suitable timeframe in which to complete it.

#### Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

The School recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities.

The School will ensure that good support is provided to pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, by making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. The School will also consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) is appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

Please see separate documents for details, **Supporting pupils with medical conditions** and **SEND** policies, both of which are available on the School website.

<sup>8</sup> [North Yorkshire County Council](#) – School Attendance – Information for parents

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<sup>10</sup> A 'session' is one half day; therefore, an absence of five school days would equate to 10 missed sessions.

## Authorised absence

'Authorised absence' means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or, in the case of illness, has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

- **Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**
  - Parents are advised to notify the School on the **first day** and, for safeguarding reasons, **every subsequent day** the child is unable to attend due to illness.
  - The School will authorise absences due to illness unless there is a genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the School can request parents to provide supporting medical evidence. The School will record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but will advise parents of its intention. The School will not request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
- **Medical or dental appointments**
  - Absence due to a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Please email the school to notify us of a pending appointment via [absence@ermysteds.uk](mailto:absence@ermysteds.uk)
  - The School, however, encourages parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- **Religious observance**
  - The School will treat a **single day's absence** as authorised when it is due to religious observance.
  - The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the School will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
- **Leave of absence authorised by the school**
  - It must be noted that taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts learning and disrupts a pupil's educational progress. The School **strongly** discourages such absence and will only grant leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances. Leave will **not** be granted for the purposes of a **family holiday**.
  - A leave of absence is granted entirely at the School's discretion and the Headteacher's decision is final. The School will consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
  - The application must be made in advance, and the School must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.
  - Where a leave of absence is granted, the School will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. If the School does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised.
  - The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## Requests for Leave of Absence

The pupil or parent should obtain an **Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time** (see Appendix 2) from the School Office or from the School website. When the completed form is returned to the School, the relevant Head of School, in consultation with the Headteacher, will decide whether to authorise or not, and send the appropriate letter.

## Appendix 1

### Missing Pupil Procedure

#### General Statement

Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are not allowed to leave the premises during school time without permission. Students in Years 12 and 13 may leave the site at certain points in the school day with the prior consent of the Sixth Form Leadership team.

It is possible that on some occasions a pupil may leave the premises without such knowledge or permission and this policy is put in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the quick and safe return of the pupil to School. The use of lesson monitor means that we will quickly be able to identify pupils missing from lessons.

#### Objectives

- To locate any missing pupil quickly.
- To ensure that all pupils are kept safely on the school premises during school hours unless they have permission to leave.
- To ensure that all pupils who leave School during school hours only do so with the permission of the Headteacher (or other delegated person) and the permission of the parent or carer.
- To ensure that teachers and staff keep pupils under appropriate supervision.
- To ensure that if a pupil cannot be found during the school day, every realistic effort is made to locate them as quickly as possible (see below) and to return them to School – in such an instance parents or carers will also be informed.

#### Procedures

It is the duty of all staff to ensure that pupils are safe and appropriately supervised during the school day. However, should it be noted that a pupil is missing:

- Teaching staff will notify the School Office immediately.
- The School Office will check to see whether the pupil is participating in an authorised activity elsewhere. If not, the staff will notify the relevant Pastoral Leader or Attendance Officer or, if these staff members are unavailable, a member of SLT, and a search will be made of the school buildings.
- In the event of the pupil not being located, the School will inform the parents or carers and, if appropriate, the police.
- The incident will be logged.

#### Outcomes

The safety of all pupils will be given our highest priority. A missing pupil is, and should be, an extremely rare occurrence. This policy aims to put in place swift, appropriate, and effective actions to locate missing pupils and to inform the appropriate people concerned.

#### Medical attention

The office staff will log the time of arrival and departure of any pupil who attends for medical attention and who remains for more than 10 mins.

## Appendix 2



### Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time Ermysted's Grammar School

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the school's permission before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Before making this application please refer to our Attendance Policy for more information.

Name of Pupil		Date of Birth	
		Form	
Address			
<b>Leave of Absence Requested</b>			
Start Date of Absence		Return Date to School	
Reason for term time absence request (please provide written evidence to support your request)			
<b>Declaration</b>			
I have read and understood the information on leave of absence in term time, unauthorised absences and penalty notices			
Name of Parent/Carer		Email Address	
Signed (Parent/Carer)		Date	

<b>FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY</b>			
The school has considered your request for leave of absence and your child's absence/s will be recorded as follows:			
Authorised		Unauthorised	
Signed			
Position			
Date			