

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

2026/27

This Policy makes direct references to the DfE document, 'Working together to improve school attendance' 2026. Further information can be found in this document and will be referred to by the college in all instances of attendance concerns. In developing and implementing this policy, we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Attendance Policy is available from the college, on the website and will be sent to new parents. Returning students and parents will be reminded of this policy at the beginning of each school year or when reviewed. The policy is reviewed annually or sooner in line with changes to national guidance.

The Senior Attendance Champion is our Vice Principal (Pastoral and Safeguarding), Kayleigh Simpson. She can be contacted by calling the college number or emailing absence@rochester-college.org.uk

We want to support all of our students and their parents/carers so that they have the best possible experience at Rochester Independent College and reach their full potential. Students with excellent attendance are more successful in school and achieve significantly higher outcomes. Low attendance can be seen as a safeguarding concern (KCSIE 2026) and is a whole school responsibility and priority.

Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation, effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with the college's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources. Improving attendance must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners. Attendance remains the expectation for students experiencing anxiety or emotional wellbeing difficulties wherever possible, recognising that attending college is often part of improving wellbeing. Support and reasonable adjustments will be considered to enable successful attendance.

The law entitles every child of a school age to a full time education suitable to their age and any additional needs. Whilst we recognise that some medical conditions or SEND may provide barriers to education, the student's right to education remains the same as their peers. We will strive to work with families and students to minimise the barriers students face and put in additional support where necessary to ensure that all students are able to access their full time education.



Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in college or more broadly requires collaborative working with families. We work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and families. Building a culture where all can, and want to, be in college and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the college. Rochester Independent College promotes good attendance through positive relationships, celebrating improvements, recognising excellent attendance where appropriate, maintaining a supportive boarding culture, and ensuring students understand the importance of attending every lesson.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents/carers to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in college and identify the support students need to overcome the barriers outside of college. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we will explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through accessing additional external services or creating attendance contracts.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention.



Roles and Responsibilities

Improving attendance is everyone's business, the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex both within and beyond the school gates and are often specific to individual students and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere students want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that a school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all students are keen and ready to learn. Specific responsibilities are:

Governing Body:

- Monitor attendance figures and hold the Principal accountable for policy implementation.
- Governors review attendance trends, challenge school leaders on attendance outcomes, and monitor the effectiveness of attendance strategies

Principal:

- Implement the policy and ensure awareness among staff, students and parents/carers.
- Report attendance statistics and issues to the governing body.
- Authorise any absence in line with DfE guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

Vice Principal Safeguarding and Pastoral:

- Oversee the implementation of the policy.
- Monitor absence data and report to the Principal and governors.
- Support staff in monitoring individual student attendance.
- Work with the parents/carers to ensure appropriate referrals to services and agencies that can provide support are made, this could include Early Help or Children's Social Care.
- Consider Multi-disciplinary support and collaboration in relation to school attendance where appropriate.
- Works with Virtual school Head for children with a social worker, including LAC.

Attendance Manager:

- Contact parents/carers on the first day of a student's absence or lateness and follow up on unexplained absences within 5 days whilst continuing to build good relationships with families.
- The Attendance Manager is on the Safeguarding team and regularly reports concerns to the team. They monitor attendance data across the college, supporting early intervention and reducing absence before it becomes habitual.



- Communicate with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Ensure accurate and complete registers using DfE absence codes are recorded on ISAMS, including whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Medical evidence will only be requested where there are reasonable grounds to do so, for example where illness is frequent, prolonged, complex, or where additional support or reasonable adjustments may be required. The College will not routinely require medical evidence for short-term illness.
- Ensure appropriate training for staff at least annually.

Heads of Lower School and Sixth Form:

- Collaborate with the VP (Safeguarding and Pastoral) and Attendance Manager to address persistent absence and support early identification, whilst having knowledge of attendance data in their respective areas of the college.
- Support communication with parents/carers regarding attendance issues.
- Ensure that attendance figures are reported to parents/carers within the whole school report.

Director of Studies:

- Monitor and support tutees regarding attendance.
- Communicate with parents/carers and teaching staff about attendance issues.
- Support students to catch up on any missed work.

Boarding Team:

- The Boarding Team ensures daily registration for boarders, supports timely arrival to lessons, and liaises with the safeguarding team and Directors of Studies where absences raise welfare concerns. All boarding absences are logged in ISAMS and monitored for patterns.
- Support unwell students to see the college nurse and support them when signed out of school for medical reasons if necessary.
- Boarding attendance is recorded via Orah at morning wake up, dinner roll and bed checks. This forms a part of safeguarding and welfare monitoring and complements academic attendance registers.

Medical Team:

- To work with day and boarding students responding to immediate medical needs and supporting long term plans to ensure good college attendance.
- Liaise with parents/carers where there are medical concerns for their child.
- Report medical concerns appropriately on ISAMS / ORAH.



- Work with the boarding team to ensure any boarding students are signed out due to medical reasons and supported.

Teachers:

- Ensure accurate registers are taken within the first 10mins of each lesson, highlighting any concerns to the Attendance Manager via email or phone.
- Ensure registers are updated throughout the lesson for any lateness.
- Raise patterns of absence to the Director of Studies or, in the case of safeguarding concerns, to the safeguarding team.

Parents/Carers:

- Perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Notify the college of any absences using absence@rochester-college.org.uk or calling the college directly - on the first day of absence by 9am and each concurrent day of absence, unless agreed otherwise.
- Notify the college of any planned absences, for example medical appointments, in advance. To ensure, where possible, that all appointments are made out of school hours.
- Ensure any term time absences are only taken in exceptional circumstances and requested, in advance. Permissions for these absences must be sought from the Principal.

Students:

- Attend college regularly and on time.
- Make up any missed work promptly upon return.
- Students should be in tutor time by 8:45am. If a student (day) is running late they must contact Student Services using either absence@rochester-college.org.uk or telephone the college. On arrival at the college the student needs to sign in with the Student Services Team.
- If a boarder is running late they must contact their Houseparent who will coordinate lesson attendance.

Sponsored Students:

- Good attendance is part of the conditions of stay for sponsored students in the UK.
- The college is responsible for accurate monitoring and follow-up.
- Missing 5 contact points without authorisation triggers an Academic & Pastoral Review involving the Dukes Director of Immigration to plan for improved attendance.



- Missing 10 contact points without authorisation results in a likely withdrawal of sponsorship, and reporting to UKVI. This would lead to the student's permission to stay being curtailed.
- Sponsorship will cease if the student cannot complete their course within their permitted stay.
- Absences exceeding 60 days presume sponsorship withdrawal unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- For reporting purposes, we consider there to be one contact point per day, either the AM or PM registers.

Admissions Team:

- To keep an up to date electronic admissions register ensuring all students are recorded and liaise with the local authority when students are added or taken off role outside of standard admission times in line with CME requirements
- Ensure the register is kept in accordance with school attendance (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2024.
- Ensure that multiple contacts are collected during the admissions process, where applicable.

Attendance Registration

Students will be registered in the morning between 09:00 and 09:30. Students who are not present at the start of the session but arrive before the register closes at 09:30 will be recorded as late (Code L). Students who arrive after the register has closed but before the end of the session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Code U).

Where no reason for absence is provided, or the reason given is not authorised in line with *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)*, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (Code O). All other absences will be marked using the codes highlighted in Appendix 1.

Students of non-compulsory school age (sixth form) who are not scheduled to attend a lesson during the designated registration period will be recorded using Code X.

The same procedures apply to afternoon registration periods, with the registration times highlighted below.

Morning Registration (AM)

- Time: 09:00 – 09:30
- Applies to all students.



Afternoon Registration (PM)

- Time: 15:00 - 15:30
- Applies to all students.

Absence

Rochester Independent College acknowledges that there can be barriers to college attendance and understands that it may be more challenging for some students than others. Therefore, we will work closely with parents/carers to seek their support throughout the student's time with us. This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of each student and their family.

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child accesses education, whether within a school or through alternative means. This means students must attend college every day it is open, except in a few allowable circumstances.

We aim for all students to maintain 100% attendance and expect at least 95% attendance from every student. The table below illustrates the impact of missing even a small percentage of lessons:

By understanding and addressing attendance barriers, we strive to ensure every student can achieve their full potential through consistent school attendance.

Student attendance over the year	... number of days missed	... number of teaching hours missed
95%	9	54
90%	18	108
85%	26	156
80%	35	210
75%	44	264

Absence can be authorised in the college by the Attendance Manager, the Medical Team or any member of SLT.

Students absent without permission from boarding will be dealt with, initially, through our Missing Students Policy.

Persistent and Severe Absence

KCSIE 2026 places emphasis on students absent from education as a safeguarding concern, especially if this is for prolonged periods or repeated occasions. All patterns of non-attendance or sudden drops in attendance are considered in the context of



safeguarding. Where appropriate, staff will escalate concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with KCSIE 2026. The attendance manager sits on the safeguarding team in recognition of the importance of school attendance and its potential link to safeguarding. Disciplinary procedures or welfare interventions will be followed as appropriate. In order to ensure early intervention, attendance data is circulated to the Director of Studies via the shared online drive at the end of every week. Director of Studies follows up on any minor attendance issues with students/parents/carers. Where support has not been successful, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate, Rochester Independent College may work with the Local Authority

The VP Pastoral and Safeguarding will check the attendance data and follow up on any patterns of non-attendance at least half termly. Through regular monitoring, students who are identified as needing additional support with attendance will be targeted and the relevant actions discussed with the student and their parents/carers. If there is no improvement, despite a collaborative effort, an escalation of support may be required. Depending on the individual circumstances, there may be a requirement for a multi-disciplinary support, a targeted support meeting, parenting contract, involvement from the Local Authority Attendance Support Team or Integrated Children's Services. If there is still no improvement, the local authority may seek legal intervention.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026 recognises persistent absenteeism as students missing 10% or more of school. Targeted support will be put in place to re-engage these students where appropriate. We recognise that attendance percentages can be disproportionately affected at the beginning of the academic year. Attendance data is therefore reviewed in context, taking into account patterns and reasons for absence to ensure that appropriate support and monitoring are in place. Where a lower percentage is the result of early-term absence, this will be monitored over time to identify improvement and ensure continued progress.

For students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), attendance is reviewed at least termly and reported to the Local Authority through scheduled returns and/or as part of the EHCP review process.

Particular focus is given to students who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent students may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an



education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

See also Children Missing in Education (CME) Policy.

Part Time Timetables

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary, time limited part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable is not used to manage a student's behaviour. Part time timetables will be documented and reviewed regularly and agreed with the student and parents/carers.

Flexi-Schooling

Flexi-schooling is an arrangement where a pupil receives part of their education at Rochester Independent College and part through home-based education provided by their parent or carer. The pupil remains on the College roll.

Flexi-schooling will only be considered following a written request from a parent or carer. The College will not initiate or require flexi-schooling arrangements. Approval is at the discretion of the Principal, who will consider the educational, safeguarding, and welfare implications for the pupil. There is no automatic entitlement to flexi-schooling and no right of appeal if a request is declined.

Where agreed, parents must enter into a formal Flexi-Schooling Agreement with the College and the Local Authority will be informed. Arrangements will be considered with reference to the DfE statutory attendance guidance. For students with an EHCP, flexi-schooling must be agreed in consultation with the LA and recorded in the EHCP.

During agreed home-learning sessions, attendance will be recorded using the 'C' code (authorised absence) in line with national attendance coding guidance. The College does not supervise pupils during periods of home-based education or provide them with learning. However, as the pupil remains on roll, the College will continue to monitor attendance, progress, and safeguarding as appropriate.

Attendance registers

Communication in the context of attendance is recorded on the student's electronic file. The local authority has the right to examine and take extracts of attendance registers. Admission and attendance registers will be kept electronically, and all entries in these registers will be preserved for 6 years.



In line with the Government regulations, we use National Codes for absence reporting.

Created/Updated	Author	Approved by	Date
September 2020	KF	AB	September 2020
August 2021	KF	AB	August 2021
September 2022	HR, KS & CD	KF	September 2022
May 2023	KS, JW	AB	May 2023
September 2023	KS, JW	AB	September 2023
September 2024	KS, JW	KF	September 2024
September 2025	KS, JW	KF	September 2025
November 2025	KS, JW	KF	November 2025
March 2026	KS, JW	KF	March 2026
September 2026	KS, JW	KF	September 2026



Appendix 1

Attendance and Absence Codes - Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Code /\: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed

Attending a place other than the school

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

Code W: Attending work experience

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

Absent - leave of absence

Relevant regulation 10(4) Table 3

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Code D: Dual registered at another school

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Absent - other authorised reasons

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code R: Religious observance

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent - unauthorised absence

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school



Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole school closure