



## **POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AND UNAUTHORISED STUDENT ABSENCE**

Last reviewed:	August 2023
Next review due:	August 2024
Reviewed by:	Director of Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

*“Attendance is the essential foundation of positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility in school.”*

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2022).

At d’Overbroeck’s, we believe that student attendance is critical to academic success and social integration, and that maintaining good school attendance is everyone’s business. Every student has a right to a full-time education and we set high attendance expectations for all our students.

The admission and attendance register at d’Overbroeck’s is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. We monitor attendance rates on an ongoing basis and teachers, personal tutors, Directors of Studies and pastoral leads will follow up concerns about attendance, as required by the law. Students are expected to attend school every day and may only miss school if they are too ill to attend or they have advance permission from the school.

Our policy and practice for attendance and dealing with instances of unauthorised absence of students is set out below. The policy will always be applied fairly and consistently but, in doing so, we always consider the individual needs of students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of this policy, d’Overbroeck’s understands its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We work proactively with parents, guardians and external agencies to remove any barriers students may face when it comes to attending school; processes and support will be adapted to the individual needs of the particular students (eg, those with long term illnesses, SEND, etc).

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, the school will endeavour where possible to hold two emergency contact details for each student, facilitating the prompt follow-up of absences.

### **1. Absence from Years 7-11 (day students only in this part of the school)**

Students in Years 7-11 are registered every morning and every afternoon in accordance with current regulations.

If a student is absent through illness or for any other reason, parents are asked to contact the school office before the start of the school day. Where a student is absent from school without prior notification from parents, the school office will contact parents (or another listed contact) within 30

minutes of when the student was expected in school and until it has been established that the student is safe.

Parents are asked to contact the school on each day of a child's absence and ensure that any absence is followed up by a written communication explaining the circumstances.

Staff responsible for student registration will follow up reasons for lateness and absence. Persistent poor punctuality/absence will involve the pastoral staff, student and parents. Parents will be informed about attendance on at least a termly basis.

## **2. Absence from Sixth Form (day and boarding students)**

### **2.1 Absence from Sixth Form lessons**

We do not have collective daily registration sessions in the Sixth Form. Attendance registers for every lesson are completed directly in iSAMS.

Teaching staff are expected to complete the attendance register at the start of every lesson throughout the day.

Parents of day students are asked to email the Sixth Form Office and Director of Studies by 8.30am to let them know if their child is ill and will be absent.

Where a student is absent from school without prior notification from parents, boarding staff or the host family, a member of the Sixth Form Office will follow-up during the first two sessions of the morning. The member of the Sixth Form Office will telephone parents (in the case of day students), Heads of Boarding Houses/host families (in the case of boarders) and/or the student's own mobile number in order to establish the whereabouts of any absentees and the reason for the absence. It is preferable that contact is made with an adult; if the reason for absence has been established with the student rather than a parent/member of staff/host family, then an email will be sent to the appropriate adult to confirm the reason the student has given for their absence.

If a student living in a host family contacts the school to say that they are unwell, the member of staff in the Sixth Form Office will alert the School Nurse, the Sixth Form Pastoral Mentor and the student's Director of Studies. The School Nurse will decide whether a video call with the student via Microsoft Teams is needed on that day to complete a medical/welfare check, assess whether further medical or pastoral support is required and, if so, take the lead on arranging this. If the student is unwell for more than one day, the School Nurse will make contact with the student and/ or Host family. If the Sixth Form Office is unable to establish the whereabouts of the student and the reason for the absence, then the matter will be referred to the Sixth Form Senior Leadership who will lead on follow up until such time as the student's safety and location has been confirmed.

The Sixth Form Office will circulate a note of absences, together with the outcome of the follow-up, to all Directors of Studies, Sixth Form teaching and Activities staff by email as soon as possible.

All unauthorised absences from classes are followed up with the students concerned by their Director of Studies, in liaison with the Sixth Form Pastoral Mentor and the Sixth Form Leadership team. Persistent unauthorised absence will be dealt with through a system of sanctions that may include timetabled study sessions in the library during free periods, daily

reporting-in at 8.30am and 'Friday work club' sessions (which take place in the latter part of the afternoon every Friday, supervised by the Head of Sixth Form).

All absences, authorised and unauthorised, are recorded on the Management Information System (MIS) and systematically communicated to the parents/guardians of the students concerned by means of a weekly email. In addition, parents will be alerted to concerns or patterns of absence by the Director of Studies or member of the Sixth Form Senior Leadership Team.

## **2.2 Absence from Sixth Form boarding houses**

Boarders may be away from their boarding house overnight at the weekend provided written permission has been received from their parents/guardian in advance, together with detailed information on where they will be staying and contact details. The Absence Authorisation Form – available from the House staff – is required at least 24 hours before the planned absence. Before leaving the house, students are asked to sign themselves out.

In the unusual event of a boarder wishing to spend a night away from the boarding house on a weekday, the same procedure applies, but the permission of their Director of Studies is also required.

Students are expected to be in their boarding house after dinner at 7.00pm, Monday through to Thursday, for a study session between 7.00pm and 9.00pm. Students may leave the house between the end of study session and the normal curfew time if they wish to do so.

If a student fails to return to the house by curfew time, then the Head of House or Boarding Assistant will:

- Try to make contact with the student concerned via his / her mobile phone;
- Try to establish their movements in the course of the evening from their friends;
- Contact the Emergency number (held by a senior member of staff) to discuss the best course of action.

The Emergency Contact will then liaise on:

- Contacting the student's friends at d'Overbroeck's to see if they know something about the student's movements that evening.
- For local students, contact the student's parents to see if the student may have gone home without notifying us in advance, or if they are able to give us any relevant information of which we may not be aware.
- Contact the school's Principal, Pastoral Director/Designated Safeguarding Lead (if not already involved)

What is done next will be agreed in discussion and will depend on the circumstances as best ascertained by everyone involved. The police will be contacted if appropriate.

## **2.3 Absence from Sixth Form Host families**

All host families have access to the office number for the Head of Non-Residential Boarding which is answered 9.30am – 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and to an out of hours Emergency

mobile which is held by a senior member of staff. Host families are aware that they have 24 hour support in relation to missing students.

If a student is not back at home when they should be, then the host family is asked to call the student's mobile number to establish if they are on their way. If there is no response, then the host family is asked to report the absence by ringing one of the emergency numbers immediately. The matter is then dealt with as above.

### **3. Absence from The International School (mainly boarding students)**

An initial registration is held before the students leave the boarding houses each morning. Any absentees at this point will be known by the Head of House and passed on to the school directly.

#### **3.1 Absence from TIS lessons**

- Students are registered every morning and every lesson on school days.
- Boarding students are expected to be in school by 8.00am for breakfast and day students by 8.30am for tutor time.
- Morning electronic registration takes place in tutor groups between 8.30am and 8.40am.
- A student who arrives between 8.35am and 8.45am is marked late, and a note is made in the register of how late they were.
- If a day student fails to turn up by 8.45am and their parents did not telephone in advance to report illness or unavoidable delay, s/he is marked as absent without authorisation.
- Immediately after morning registration, the TIS Administrator will follow up any unauthorised/ unexplained absences by:
  - calling the Head of House;
  - calling the student's parents and the students' mobile number;
  - continuing to do so until the student's whereabouts have been established and we are reassured that s/he is safe.
- If the reason for absence has been established with the student rather than a member of staff, then an email will be sent to the appropriate adult to confirm the reason the student has given for their absence.
- Afternoon registration takes place in a lesson after lunch.
- An absence email is circulated to all staff each morning and updated if necessary during the day, for example if a student becomes unwell.
- The full attendance register is recorded in the MIS.

All absences, authorised and unauthorised, are recorded in the MIS and systematically communicated to the parents/guardians of the students concerned. In addition, parents/guardians will be alerted to concerns or patterns of absence by the Form Tutor or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **3.2 Absence from TIS boarding houses**

The procedures for dealing with these are the same as those set out for the Sixth Form except that:

- Curfew time is earlier for students who are under 16.
- The Head of The International School or Deputy Director for Student Wellbeing) will usually also be contacted in the case of an unexplained absence or lateness after curfew time.
- The Absence Authorisation Form is required at least 48 hours before the planned absence.
- In the unusual event of a boarder wishing to spend a night away from the boarding house on a weekday, the same procedure applies, but the permission of the Head of the International School is also required.
- Students are expected to be in their boarding house after dinner Monday through to Thursday, for a study session between 7.00pm and 8.30pm.

### **4. Students missing from education**

Students being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, such as abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation, travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage d'Overbroeck's will put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who are identified as absent or missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

d'Overbroeck's will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

d'Overbroeck's will notify the local authority of any student who is going to be deleted from our school Admissions Register where the student:

- has been taken out of school by their parents and is being educated outside the school system, eg, home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of Oxford;
- has been certified by a relevant medical practitioner as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither the student nor their parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend this school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and we as a school do not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- has been permanently excluded.

The notification will be made as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the student's name from the register.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with DfE guidance on:

From September 2022: [Working together to improve school attendance](#): Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (DfE, published May 2022, applies from September 2022)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) (DfE, published May 2022, applies from September 2022)

Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

Children missing education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Keeping children safe in education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>