

POLICY ON UNAUTHORISED STUDENT ABSENCE

Our policy and practice for dealing with instances of unauthorised absence from students are set out below.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018, the school will endeavour where possible to hold two emergency contact details for each student in order to make contact with an absent student.

Years 7-11 (day students only in this part of the school)

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

Where a student is absent from school without prior notification from parents, staff in the office will contact the parents as early as possible using home, mobile, emergency telephone numbers as appropriate, and will continue to do so until we know where the student is and have established that s/he is safe. The Head and Deputy Head of Years 7-11 are kept informed.

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Sixth Form (day and boarding students)

Absence from lessons

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

Teaching staff are expected to complete the attendance register at the start of every lesson throughout the day. For the first two teaching sessions of the morning, if a teacher has not completed their register in the first 10 minutes of the lesson, then a member of staff from the Sixth Form office will go to the classroom concerned and make a note of any absences.

All absences from the first two sessions of the morning are then followed up by telephone to ensure that we know the whereabouts of any absentees and the reason for the absence. This may mean telephoning 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.

The Sixth Form Office will then circulate a note of such absences together with the outcome of the telephone follow-up to all Directors of Studies (DoS) and to teaching and Activities staff by email shortly afterwards.

If the Sixth Form Office is unable to establish the whereabouts of the student and the reason for the absence, then the matter is referred to the student's DoS who will follow it up until such time as the student has been located and we are sure that s/he is safe.

If the DoS is still unable to locate the student, then the matter is referred to the Head of Lower Sixth and the Head of Sixth Form who will then decide what to do next.

All unauthorised absences from classes are followed up with the students concerned by their DoS. Persistent absenteeism is 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, 'Friday work club' sessions, which take place in the latter part of the afternoon every Friday, supervised by the Head of Sixth Form, etc.

All absences, authorised and unauthorised, are recorded in PASS and systematically communicated to the parents / guardians of the students concerned by means of a weekly email sent out on Friday afternoon.

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Absence from boarding houses / host families

Boarding houses

Boarders may be away from their boarding house overnight at the weekend provided we have received written permission from their parents / guardian in advance, together with information on where they will be staying. Before leaving the house, students are asked to mark themselves out and to confirm their contact details while they are away from the house.

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 DoS is also required.

Students are expected to be in their boarding house after dinner at 7.00pm, Monday through to Thursday, by 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 Tutor 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.
- Use the 'out-of-hours' mobile to contact the Head of Boarding or the Deputy Principal to discuss the best course of action.

The Head of Boarding will then

- Try to make contact with the student's friends at d'Overbroeck's to see if know something about the student's movements that evening.
- If they live relatively locally, she will also 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 Deputy Principal if not already involved or Principal.

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 it is felt that this is appropriate.

Host families

All host families have access to the Head of Host Families office number which is answered 9.30am – 5.00pm five days a week and to an out of hours emergency mobile which is held by the Deputy Principal. Host families are aware that they have 24hour 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.

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The International School (usually all boarders)

All boarding students in TIS are taken by bus to the school in the mornings. An initial registration is therefore held before the transport departs the Houses. Any absentees at this point will be known by the Head of House and passed on to the school directly.

Absence from lessons

- Students are registered in their class groups every morning and every afternoon on every school day. During the registration period, one of the Form Tutor team is on hand to circulate messages and check on welfare.
- Students are expected to be in school by 8.35am.
- Students are asked to call the office at the International School before 8.30am if they are unwell or if they know that they are going to be late for an unavoidable reason.
- Morning electronic registration takes place in class groups between 8.35am and 8.45am.
- 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. This is reported to the circulating Form Tutor.
- If a student fails to turn up by 8.45am, and did not telephone in advance to report illness or unavoidable delay, s/he is marked as absent without authorisation.
- Immediately after morning registration, the IS Administrator will follow up any unauthorised / unexplained absences by:
 - calling the student's mobile number;
 - calling the Head of House / host family as appropriate;
 - continuing to do so until the student's whereabouts have been established and we are reassured that s/he is safe.
- Afternoon registration takes place in class groups, at the start of period 4. The TIS Administrator circulates to make sure that everyone is present.

- The information gathered from morning and afternoon registration sessions is recorded on the notice board in the staff room so all teaching staff are aware of it. An absence email is also circulated to all staff.
- The full attendance register is recorded in PASS.
- Paper registers for use during Friday assembly, which is held in the school Hall, are kept in the IS office and can be referred to at any time.

All absences, authorised and unauthorised, are recorded in PASS and systematically communicated to the parents / guardians of the students concerned by means of a weekly email sent out on Monday mornings.

Absence from boarding houses / host families

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, in her absence, the Senior Pastoral Tutor) will usually also be contacted in the case of an unexplained absence or lateness after curfew time.

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Students missing from education

Continuous unexplained absence, or a pattern of frequent unexplained absenteeism could potentially be indicators of possible safeguarding concerns such as neglect, child sexual exploitation, travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

In keeping with regulatory obligations we will inform the People Tracking Officer at Oxfordshire County Council of any student who is going to be deleted from our school Admissions Register where s/he:

- has been taken out of school by her/his parents and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has 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 his/her parent(s) 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 s/he will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- has been permanently excluded.

We appreciate that KCSIE has introduced this obligation on all schools so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

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.

We will also inform the local authority of any student 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.

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