

CONCORD COLLEGE

Policy & Procedure on Student Attendance & Absences

(including CME = Children who go Missing from Education)

Monitoring attendance is an important factor in terms of safeguarding since a drop in school attendance or a child going missing from education could be indicators of potential abuse. This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the College's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Staff Handbook document 11.16). The College has a duty to inform Shropshire Council of any pupil who is deleted from the admissions register. - The form to use in such cases can be found below.

It is also an essential element in terms of Concord's aims and ethos in seeking successful academic outcomes for its pupils because attending lessons regularly should enable students to make progress academically. Due to having far more boarders than day students, it is likely that much of what follows will usually apply to day students from the local area.

Procedure - Concerns about levels of Attendance

The current threshold for concern about attendance in Shropshire is 90%. While the Council has a staff of Education Welfare Officers (or EWOs) to help maintained schools follow up on poor attendance (including the ability to issue financial penalties to parents for unauthorised absence), the Concord College procedure to be followed when attendance drops below 90% is:

1. A Senior Teacher would write a first letter, or e-mail, seeking to: share with parents the College's concern about a drop in attendance; seek to discover the reasons for it; find solutions to enable improvement in attendance and/or enable academic progress (- perhaps by sending work home to the sick student for completion).
2. If there was no improvement in attendance after the first e-mail, a second e-mail will be sent.
3. If concerns continue, parents should be invited into College to discuss the reasons for poor attendance. During this discussion, parental consent for sharing concerns with external agencies might be sought. This could result in: information sharing leading to a multi-agency response; involvement of and assessment by social workers; Early Help support.

In the case of long-term absence for medical reasons (& with absences of longer than 1 week of lessons), the College should ask parents to provide a letter from the GP (or other medical professional in charge of treating the student - such as a consultant) declaring that the student is medically unfit for school.

In exceptional cases where concerns about attendance continue and parents are not compliant with the College, then consideration will be given to: contacting professionals directly for information; contacting concerned professionals to hold a meeting about the student; contacting the FPOC at Shropshire Council to arrange a consultation with a social worker; College staff seek to arrange a visit to the home of the student to discuss attendance with the

parents and visit the pupil; contacting the Shropshire EWOs to discuss arranging for them to complete an assessment of the situation on behalf of the College (-the College will need to pay for this service).

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation.

Shropshire Council require schools to complete an online MS Form when a school age pupil is to be removed from the register. This can be found here:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance-or-exclusion/children-missing-education-cme/>

Procedure - Following up on Absences

Absence from morning registration - Academic tutors should record any absences on SIMS using the appropriate N code with a flagged comment if no good reason for a student's absence is known. Monday to Friday, the Nurse on duty in conjunction with the Pastoral Assistants will visit missing boarders' rooms, investigate any absences, update SIMS accordingly (with changed codes and additional red flag information). Internal e-mails will be used to share information with relevant staff (such as Boarding Parents & Academic/ Registration Tutors, Members of the PTM & SMT.) Parents of absent day students should 'phone the College or e-mail Attendance@concordcollege.org.uk or be contacted by staff via mobile 'phone, home 'phone and/or e-mail to check on the health and whereabouts of day students. At weekends, students missing the first registration of the day should be followed up by weekend duty staff (- as per the procedures for Mon-Fri absences above).

Absence from lessons - Teachers are to consider the presence of previous codes & patterns on Live Register (and/or SIMS) earlier in the day. These might provide the reason for a student's absence - along with red flag comments. The possibility of unreported illness should be considered and "medical" and "Attendance" groups should be e-mailed as a matter of urgency to make certain of the wellbeing & whereabouts of the missing student.

Unauthorised absence from prep. - Duty Teachers should follow the separate procedures as outlined in the separate Prep Duty Checklist (2.20 in the Staff Handbook).

Unauthorised absence at bedtime - Boarding Parents should check with a student's close friends in order to ascertain a reason for absence, then:

For Lower School students - inform the Head of Lower School (Rachel Coward) immediately

For Upper School students - use discretion whether to inform the VP Pastoral (Jeremy Kerslake) or a Pastoral Manager immediately or wait until next morning

Overnight absence - If a student cannot be located quickly, then Jeremy Kerslake, Michael Truss and/or Pastoral Managers will undertake a risk assessment and this might well result in them:

- notifying parents
- informing local Police and Social Services as necessary

Arranging exeats

Boarding Parents should consider the age of the student when approving exeats as follows:

The College's concern for the welfare of its students and duty of care means that the permission of parents/ guardian is essential for each specific occasion when a student is to leave the campus overnight. It is important that the College knows as much as possible about where they are going/ what they are doing/ who they are staying with. This information should be contained in the e-mail/ letter/fax giving parental permission and also obtained from the student concerned and written down on an exeat form.

Parental permissions for boarders' overnight absences (both exeats and holidays) should normally be sent via e-mail to Holidays@concordcollege.org.uk.

Exeats should be limited to 2 or 3 per term under the College rules.

Exeat forms require the student to undertake some careful planning prior to their trip and to discuss the potential risks involved with the member of staff giving permission. If the student does not return from the overnight absence at the expected time, this written record could have very real practical and legal implications for finding the student and confirming that the College has taken "the actions of responsible parents".

Arranging holiday absences from College

Boarding Parents should consider the age & quality of information provided/ safety arrangements in place for the student when collecting holiday slips and also when considering end-of-year arrangements for departure. Please see the procedures for arranging exeats.

Holiday slips should provide full and detailed information for Lower School boarders.

J B Kerslake

First published - March 2017

Reviewed: DAW July 2022

Reviewed by the Welfare Committee of the Board of Trustees Board 03/12/21