

INSPIRING PRIMARIES ACADEMY TRUST

Reviewed by ELT: January 2024 (updated November 2024 in line with new guidance)
The Board of Trustees reviewed and adopted this policy on: 14th February 2024
To be reviewed (Three year cycle): Spring 2027

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1. IPAT schools expect full attendance from their pupils in order that they take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them, and aim to support pupils in developing positive attitudes towards punctuality and attendance.

Pupils should be made aware, by both parents and staff, that their presence is important.

1.2. Parents of pupils of compulsory school age are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school; they risk prosecution if they fail in this duty.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for absence.

1.3. Parents should be aware that absence from school may have a detrimental effect on their child's education.

Learning is a complex process in which knowledge, skills and understanding are developed and built on systematically. Interruptions to this process can lead to gaps in a child's knowledge and understanding.

If parents insist on taking their child out of school during term time then they must accept that they bear responsibility for the consequential effects upon their child's education.

The school cannot influence a child's education if the child does not attend school.

1.4. Good attendance is crucial because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%;

*“National data also shows that in 2019, primary school children in Key Stage 2 **who didn't achieve** the expected standard in reading, writing and maths **missed on average four more days per school year** than those whose performance exceeded the expected standard.*

National data from 2019 shows that 84% of Key Stage 2 pupils who had 100% attendance achieved the expected standard, compared to 40% of pupils who were persistently absent across the key stage.”

Why is school attendance so important and what are the risks of missing a day? (Department for Education, May 2023)

- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

2.1. A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed, that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. This may include liaison with the Local Authority and other external agencies.

2.1.1. The school attendance leader will convene an attendance review meeting at least once a month with those having delegated responsibilities as set out below.

2.2. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, a member of the attendance team will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

2.2.1 Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents or carers will be invited to attend a meeting at the school to discuss the problem and what support might be offered.

2.3. The school attendance lead may delegate some responsibilities to a family support worker if employed at the school.

Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school, including identifying and addressing any gaps in knowledge or understanding.
- Where there is a prolonged absence, remote support will be planned and offered with the expectation that parents/carers will engage appropriately.

Responsibilities of office staff

- The safeguarding of our children is our primary concern. Therefore the office staff must be able to account for every child on every school day.
- Check registers promptly each morning and afternoon and identify any children who are not accounted for.
- Answer telephone calls and monitor answer phone messages for reports of absences.
- On the first day of absence, contact parents/carers of children who are not accounted for to find out why their child is not at school. If it is not possible to speak to a parent or carer the IPAT Missing Child Policy should be followed.
- Accept delegated responsibility for attendance tracking if agreed with the attendance lead.

Responsibilities of pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Be ready for the day's learning.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

2.4. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 lays a duty on parents to ensure that their child receives an efficient, full-time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs that they may have. Parents may be prosecuted if they fail to ensure their child receives an education.

2.5. Parents/carers should:

- Ensure that children arrive at school on time. Children who arrive in school after registration begins must go directly to the school office where their arrival time and reason for lateness is recorded. They are then marked as late in the register. Arrivals after 9.30am. will be considered as absences and require authorisation.
- Inform the school on the first day of absence by telephone or electronic message and contact the school again on all subsequent days of absence. The school should be contacted no later than 9.30am on ALL days of absence. Failure to do so may result in the school enacting the provisions contained within the Missing Child policy.
- Discuss with the office team any planned absences well in advance.
- Fully support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Responsibilities of The Trust and Local Governing Bodies

2.6. The Trust Executive Team and Local Governing Bodies will offer support to the school attendance lead in enacting this policy, as well as providing oversight of attendance trends.

3. ABSENCE

3.1. There are two types of absence:

3.1.1. **Authorised** (where the school approves pupil absence), which might include:

- pupil sickness
- serious or critical illness of a close relative
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments (you will be asked to show an appointment letter by the office team in such circumstances)
- exceptional short term domestic circumstances
- religious observance
- bereavement of a close relative
- wedding of immediate family member
- attending an embassy to arrange a visa or renew a passport where this cannot be arranged out of term time
- attendance at or in connection with a Children's Hearing or Care Review
- approved activities for sports and the arts
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

3.1.2. **Unauthorised** (where the school will not approve absence)

Absence will not be authorised for events such as:

- shopping trips
- birthday or other day trips
- non-medical appointments
- closure of a sibling's school for training days
- family holidays
- Traveller pupils travelling for non-occupational purposes

An absence will automatically be recorded as unauthorised if there is no telephone/written explanation received from parents.

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10 week period.

4. FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

4.1. Parents should not book a family holiday during term time. A pupil's absence in term time can seriously disrupt the continuity of their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days that they are away, but they are also less well prepared for the lessons building on this when they return. Absence can also disrupt their friendships.

4.2. From 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education Regulations in relation to absence from school give NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave (for example following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events).

4.3. Parents must notify the headteacher in writing if they wish to apply for exceptional leave of absence from school for any reason using the appropriate form. Each request will be considered individually. Exceptional leave requests should be made prior to making any further arrangements that commit a child to the absence.

4.4. The following will not be deemed as exceptional circumstances:

- the availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation
- holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term
- holidays booked by a third party

4.5. The school reserves the right to withdraw authorisation should a child's attendance deteriorate between the leave of absence application and the time when the absence is due to occur.

4.6. The school recognises that parents' circumstances (financial position, working commitments etc) vary enormously but the headteacher is nonetheless required to ensure that pupils only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable.

4.7. If a child is taken out of school for a holiday in term time and an application for leave of absence for the holiday has been refused by the school this absence will be unauthorised and the local authority may issue a Penalty Notice in the sum of £80 per parent/carer per child. This increases to £160 if not paid within 21 days. This fine increases for a second offence within three years. For a third offence in three years, the case may be referred to the magistrates court.

5. LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE / ATTENDANCE GIVING CAUSE FOR CONCERN

5.1. Whilst encouraging 100% attendance if possible, we recognise that there are circumstances in which attendance may not be possible.

It is our expectation that all pupils will achieve attendance of 96% and above. Attendance is monitored closely. Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance falls to 93% as the child may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.

5.2. Parents of pupils with attendance below 90%, which is considered to be persistent absenteeism, and with a high level of unauthorised absence, are at risk of fixed penalty notices.

5.3. Where there is no significant improvement in attendance the parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the situation. This will lead to an agreed attendance support contract between home and school to avoid any future unnecessary absences.

Appendix A: School Register - Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)

E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In police detention · Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or · Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Pupil Leave of Absence Application Form

Please note, leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If not agreed, the period will be marked as 'unauthorised absence' and recorded on your child's school record accordingly.

Please complete and return to the school office.

Child's Name:	
Class:	
Date of requested absence:	
From:	To:
Total School Days:	
Please indicate why this leave of absence cannot take place in the course of the normal school holiday pattern. (Attach a copy of any appointment letter or documentation to support this)	
Signed by the person with legal responsibility for the young person: Date:	
For office use only: Absence code:	Agreed by:

Appendix B: Attendance Management Flowchart

