

Attendance Policy

ISP School



Approved by:

Local Governing Body

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Attendance Policy

CONTENT	PAGE NO.
1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. School procedures.....	3-5
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	6
5. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	7
6. Attendance monitoring.....	7
7. Roles and responsibilities.....	7-8
8. Monitoring arrangements	8
9. Links with other policies	8
Appendix 1: attendance codes	9-11
10. Addendum: COVID 19 absences and reporting	11

Attendance Policy

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Those pupils not attending school are our most at risk pupils in terms of safeguarding and failing to make progress. We will proactively seek to reduce episodes of non-attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Attendance Policy

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment
-

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:30 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 am and will be kept open until 8:55 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

The parent/carer is required to call the school:

Teynham: 01795 523900

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

The attendance officer will contact the parents/carers of children not in school if no contact has been made by 9am. If the attendance officer is unable to contact parents/carers then a message will be left and an email sent advising the parent/carer to contact the school. Logs of phone calls and emails are kept for safeguarding/welfare purposes.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Attendance Policy

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carer must notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment on the numbers below:

Teynham: 01795 523900

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Parents are to report to reception on arrival and sign their child in if they arrive late for any reason.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We act proactively to incidents of unauthorised absence including holding parent/carer meetings on the school premises or at home addresses. We conduct home visits to support parents/carers to ensure pupils are in school and we will pursue court action to address unauthorised absences when necessary.

3.6 Reporting to parents

We report pupil's attendance termly to parents/carers via school reports and/or parent/carer progress days.

Attendance Policy

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as on balance based on the case presented the Head Teacher determines that the absence supports the mental, emotional or physical wellbeing of the pupil.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head Teacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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
- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default, and is only granted to pupils in year 11. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school
- Flexi-schooling provision – in circumstances where this is deemed appropriate by the Head Teacher a pupil may be placed on a part time timetable. This would be in exceptional circumstances and would be documented in detail and reviewed at least every 6 weeks.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Head Teacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

Attendance Policy

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We communicate early about issues acknowledging positive improvements by phone calls home and updates in contact books. Initiatives such as raffle prizes for high attenders being conducted and pupils being awarded certificates for high attendance. ISP school will offer support to all families that may be experiencing difficulties with their child's attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents/Carers are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider the first stage of our school attendance monitoring procedure.

Stage 1 - Phone call to parents/carers offering support to increase attendance.

Stage 2 - Attendance letter outlining continued absences from school.

Stage 3 - Parents/Carers asked to come in to school for an attendance meeting.

Stage 4 - Parents/Carers fined (£60 per parent, per child. If this is not paid within 28 days then this will rise to £120) (see 4.2 above)

The **persistent absence** threshold is attendance below 95%. If a pupil's individual absence rate is lower than or equal to 95%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee and we may conduct home visits. This is again at the discretion of the Head Teacher. We recognise that there may be situations that will result in lower attendance. ISP school Teynham does not want to fine parents but work with them, and support them as a family to increase their child's attendance.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance Policy

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head Teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Works with the Senior Leadership Team and class teachers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Local Governing Board. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Attendance Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Attendance Policy

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness. This now includes COVID - 19
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

Attendance Policy

O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Addendum – COVID-19 (January 2022)

Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19

Anyone with a COVID-19 positive test result should stay at home and self-isolate immediately.

Pupils should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school. Pupils should only return after having two negative LFT's, one on day 6 and one on day 7. If a pupil is still showing positive for having COVID-19 they should remain at home until two further tests, on two separate days, show a negative result up to day 10 of isolating.

If pupils live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, from 16 August 2021, if you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months you will not be required to self-isolate if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Household members do not isolate, unless symptomatic or over 18 and 6 months and not double vaccinated.

Attendance Policy

Parents and carers refusing to send their children to school due to a household COVID case will be registered as an 'O' (unauthorised). However, as a school, we fully appreciate and understand the nature of some of our more vulnerable families so this will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Remote education

Remote education will be offered to all pupils who are at home isolating due to COVID-19. However if your child is ill with the virus there is no expectation that work is completed. ISP school will keep a record of remote learning but this will not need to be tracked in attendance.

Attendance Policy

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