

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Statement

The aim of this attendance policy is to encourage all pupils to attend school regularly, with as few absences as possible. As a result, they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available at the school.

Attendance

Children are expected to attend school every morning and afternoon for 190 days per year (380 attendance marks) unless there is a good reason for their absence.

Absence Notification Procedure For Parents/Carers

Obviously, there will be times when a child is unavoidably unable to attend school e.g. owing to sickness. In such cases, parents should telephone the school by 9.30 a.m. on the morning of the first day of absence. The school administrator will make a note of the reason given, inform the class teacher and ensure that the register (SIMS electronic attendance record) is marked with the appropriate code. If no phone call is received by 9.30am, the attendance officer/administrator will then text or phone the child's parents/carers to find out why the child is not in school and a record will be kept that this text/phone call has been made. In some cases, where there are ongoing safeguarding concerns, a home visit will be made.

If, on the second day of absence, no contact has been possible and the child is still absent, the school administrator/attendance officer will text/phone the parents/carers again.

If, by 9.30 am on the third day, contact has still not been made, a home visit will be made. In some cases, the home visit may take place earlier than 3 days in. When a home visit is made, but there is no response to the door knock, a visiting card will be left asking the parent/guardian to contact the school as soon as possible.

If no response is forthcoming, a representative from the school will visit the home address at the beginning of the second week of absence (making sure that a risk assessment has been carried out first). If a school has a particular concern, such as a safeguarding concern, a home visit will be made within the first two days of an unreported absence.

If by the end of the second week the child has not been seen and parents/carers have not made contact either, the school will contact the Educational Inclusion Partnership to alert them that they have a child missing from school. In cases of safeguarding concern this will be reported earlier to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) team and advice followed.

Absence

If a child is absent, parents/carers should send a letter or phone the school giving the school the appropriate details. This must include the specific reason for absence due to illness. If it is a planned absence for a specific reason e.g. hospital appointment, this should be given in advance in writing.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised absence (where the school approves the absence)
- Unauthorised absence (where the school is unable to authorise the absence)

Absence will be **authorised** for:

- Sickness (where the school is satisfied that the illness is authentic)
- Medical/dental appointments if urgent
- Days of religious observance of the religious body to which the parent belongs

The following list shows examples of exceptional circumstances (these may be authorised at the discretion of the head teacher):

- One off, short absence to attend a special occasion such as the wedding of a parent
- Bereavement of a close family member
- Education off site e.g. to attend a sports tournament, ballet exam
- Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made in writing prior to the event on the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust Form 'Planned Absence During Term Time'. The head teacher of the relevant school will review each request and decide if it meets the criteria. Parents will be informed of the outcome by letter. Where necessary (for example with siblings), schools across the Trust will liaise to make a decision on authorisation.

In the interests of the children's education, the Irthlingborough and Finedon Learning Trust does not authorise absences, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- **Permission will not be given for parents to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time.**
- The school undertakes to comply in all matters relating to attendance with Regulatory Requirements in respect of The Education (Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006 and the 2013 amendments regarding the removal of the references relating to family holidays.
- Sickness absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the school is not advised of the reason.
- Days out will not be authorised
- Absence that falls into one of the other categories listed above will be unauthorised, if it is taken without prior permission.

Parents who take their children on holiday in term time may be referred to the Education Inclusion Partnership. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a fixed penalty fine to parents. These currently stand at £60 per parent, per child. A family with two parents and two children could incur a fine of £240.

Unsatisfactory attendance

- Less than 96% attendance. This will have a serious effect on progress
- Persistent lateness

Attendance of all children is monitored on a weekly basis and unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality are viewed seriously.

Stage 1

When a child's attendance drops below 93% over a 6 week period, a letter will be sent to parents/ carers of the child to let them know that attendance is below expected.

Stage 2

When a child's attendance falls below 90% for the year to date, a letter will be sent to alert parents/carers to the concerns. There may also be a follow-up phone call. Parents will also

be invited to attend an Attendance Surgery if necessary. Support may be offered from a family worker and an improvement in attendance will be expected.

Stage 3 Cases where there are serious causes for concern

Where there is no improvement, this becomes a serious cause for concern (below 90%). A letter will be sent to the parents of the child, to alert them to the concern and invite them to a Parenting Contract meeting at the school. A contract will be made with an attendance target and this will be monitored closely. If the parents do not attend the Parent Contract meeting, they will be informed in writing of the target set in their absence.

Step 4

Where school procedures do not bring about sufficient improvement in attendance, a referral will be made to the Education Inclusion Partnership. This may result in a fixed penalty notice, an interview under caution or even a court appearance and a fine.

The school will monitor trends of children with attendance below 95% and notify parents of any concerns or patterns noted.

Unauthorised absence is effectively truancy and will be dealt with very seriously.

Lateness

Children who arrive at school after the register has been taken will be classed as late, using the 'L' code. Such pupils must report to, or be brought to, the school office upon arrival in order that their late attendance can be recorded in the register. Pupils who are consistently late disrupt not only their own education but also that of the other children in the class. If a pupil is consistently late, a letter will be sent to their parents asking for their co-operation. Should this not be forthcoming, a meeting will be arranged with the head teacher. A referral may be made to an Education Attendance Officer, if there are on-going concerns.

If a child arrives in school 30 minutes after the start of school, they will be classed as late using the code 'U'. This will have an adverse effect on their attendance record as it will class as an absence.

Reporting

The school's attendance figures are reported to Directors and the Schools' Local Governing Bodies in the Headteacher's report. Particular concerns are then discussed at local governors' meetings and ways to improve attendance actioned.

Setting Targets

Targets for attendance are set annually and are shared with Directors. These targets are then reviewed and an action plan is drawn up to deal with any issues arising.

Promoting Good Attendance

The school encourages good attendance by reminding parents regularly of the importance of their child's regular attendance.

Attendance will be discussed with parents/carers at consultation meetings/Parents' Evenings in regard to the child's progress.

REGISTRATION

All pupils are registered twice a day by their class teacher - before the start of morning school and immediately after lunch by whichever member of staff is teaching them. A record is kept of all absences.

All absences are noted by the School Office and records kept within the school. Unauthorised absences are investigated by the school office and family workers. The following codes are used to mark reasons for absence:

Present at school

- / \ Present
- L Late (before registers closed)

Present at an Approved Off-site Educational Activity

- B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
- D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
- J Interview
- P Approved sporting activity
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience

Authorised Absence

- C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made)
- H Family Holiday (agreed)
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
- M Medical/Dental appointments
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

- G Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- U Late (after registration closed)

Administrative Codes

- X Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
- Y Enforced closure
- Z Pupil not on roll

School closed to pupils

This policy will be reviewed annually, by the Trust directors, in line with the school's review schedule for policies or at a point of specific regulation changes.