



ATTENDANCE Policy

Date	Description [i.e. draft, consultation with staff, approval by Governors, review due]
Sept 2024	Written by Jo Hilton - Head Teacher
Sept 2024	Reviewed and approved by FGB

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. PRINCIPLES

- The environment and atmosphere of the school promotes full and regular attendance.
- All staff are actively involved in the promotion of full attendance through encouragement, monitoring and reporting.
- All staff are fully aware of their role and responsibility in the promotion of full attendance.
- Parents/carers are made aware of the importance of full attendance and punctuality and the school's expectations in relation to these.

- Parents/carers are made aware of the school's procedures for returning to school following absence or lateness and notification requirements on these occasions. This includes the procedures for applying for leave of absence.
- Parents/carers are informed of their legal responsibilities for ensuring full attendance of their children and the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence
- Support in dealing with cases of persistent non-attendance and lateness is available from the Education Welfare Service
- Levels of attendance will be monitored and reported on in line with legal requirements.

The school will follow all Local Authority Procedures for school attendance.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board is responsible for:

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

4.2 The head teacher and deputy are responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or liaising with the EWO and LBH.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

4.3 The School's EWO is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance of pupils on a weekly basis
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Prepare letters for parents/carers where attendance and/or punctuality are a concern
- Meet with parents/carers as necessary
- Follow up with parents where a response is not received or meetings are not attended
- Set targets for parents/carers to improve attendance where there is cause for concern

- Keep a log of all letters sent, meetings requested, attempts to contact parents.
- Prepare paperwork for the LA where attendance issues persist or unauthorised leave is taken.

4.4 Class teachers are responsible for:

- Marking registers each session
- Alerting the head/deputy to any patterns of absence or lateness
- Liaising with the school administration/welfare staff
- Recording information received from parents/carers in the class register on Scholarpack, noting initial e.g. “Vomiting bug AB”.

4.5 The School Administration Assistant / Administration Manager is responsible for:

- recording information received from parents in the class register on Scholarpack
- processing completed class registers on Scholarpack at the start of each morning session to create the absence list
- checking daily that afternoon registers have been completed for all classes and following up with teachers where this is not the case.
- following up first day of absence by telephone and noting this in the register on Scholarpack. If there is no response to the telephone call this must be noted and alternative forms of communication should be attempted (email, text etc). Multiple attempts should be made to contact the parents/carers on the first day of absence. Additional contacts on the child’s file should be utilised where necessary. It is essential that there is a known reason for all absences – this is a safeguarding issue.
- Should multiple days of absence occur, where appropriate, contact with parent/carers should be made every day.
- Parents/carers should be contacted on a daily basis where a child is absent from school, unless there has been an agreed medical reason for the absence.
- Where a medical reason for absence has been agreed, this should be noted on the register on a daily basis.
- Whoever makes contact with the parent/carer, must initial the note on Scholarpack e.g. “Vomiting bug AB”.
- Making sure the up to date attendance codes are used.
- Speaking with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately if any LAC pupils or those on CP plans are not present in school.

4.6 Parents and Carers are responsible for ensuring that children receive an effective education and, if this is to be in school, that:

- pupils attend school regularly
- pupils arrive at school, and are collected at the end of the day, punctually
- they inform the school of the reason for absence in advance of, or on, the first day of absence
- when pupils arrive late they are signed in at the school office and, if they need to collect them before the end of the school day, they sign them out at the office
- if necessary to apply to the Head Teacher for leave of absence using the appropriate form (available from the school office) in advance of the absence.

4.7 The LA Education Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining regular contact with the school
- liaising between home and school on matters relating to attendance and pupil welfare
- following up referrals from school
- advising school on matters relating to attendance

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. At Ivybridge we use Scholarpack.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 0845hrs and ends at 1515hrs

Pupils must arrive in school by 0845hrs on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 0850hrs and will be kept open until 0900hrs. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1300hrs.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

A child's absence will be regarded as unauthorised until the school office has been informed of the reason for the absence. Once the reason has been given it is for the school to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. In general, an absence is regarded as authorised when it is for one of the following reasons:

- Sickness (unless the school has good reason to believe this is not authentic) or some unavoidable cause
- Religious observance (maximum of 2 days in each school year)
- Leave of absence has been granted.

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unusual occurrences which happen very infrequently such as unplanned emergencies (e.g. death of a close relative) beyond the control of a family where alternative arrangements cannot be made for the children to attend school.

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 headteacher's discretion. Please contact the school office for an application form which will only be considered if accompanied by the requested supporting documents.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The school will not authorise family holidays taken during term time even if this is to visit elderly relatives abroad, these visits must be arranged within the holidays.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the planned absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

5.2 Persistent lateness and non-attendance

Any absence for which the school has not been notified will be followed up by telephone on the first day of absence as close as possible to the start of the school day. This is the responsibility of the administration assistants in the main office.

The school employs its own EWO, Mrs Lesley Hole, who has responsibility for monitoring attendance of all pupils and for following up any concerns.

For all pupils the minimum expected attendance is 96%. Where there is a concern about a pupil's attendance parents/carers will be sent a letter from the Headteacher (with a follow up email) by the EWO and attendance targets set. Where the attendance of any pupil falls between 90% and 96% parents/carers may be invited to a meeting and attendance and/or punctuality continues to be closely monitored. If a parent fails to respond to a letter (and email) regarding absence or fails to attend a meeting without explanation this will be followed up by the EWO who will make every attempt to make contact and will record these efforts on the pupil's concern log. Where attendance continues to be a concern and remains below 90% a referral is made to the Local Authority.

5.3 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)

- Details of the support provided so far

- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Punctuality of pupils will also be monitored and where children persistently arrive late for school will be initially be informed in writing and may be invited into school for a meeting with our EWO. Similar procedures to those for absence will be followed.

Any pupil who does not attend school for a four-week period will usually be removed from the school roll and will not have their place held open. The Local Authority will be informed of any pupil removed from the school role and for whom we do not have confirmation that they are attending another school – they will be deemed Children Missing from Education.

6. Home Education

A parent/carer may decide to request the removal of their child from the school role if they wish to educate them at home. This request must be made in writing. The Local Authority will be informed immediately of any child being removed from the school role for this reason; the school will retain the written request from the parent/carer on file in accordance with our policy for retaining records.

7. Promoting attendance and punctuality

Each week the class with the highest attendance is announced in Whole School Assembly. The KS1 class with the highest attendance is awarded the attendance teddy and in KS2 an attendance trophy is awarded.

At the end of term children who have records of full attendance and excellent punctuality will be recognised with the presentation of certificates. Children whose records show full and punctual attendance for a full academic year will be presented with a certificate and individual trophy. The outstanding attendance of any year 6 pupils throughout their time at the school may be recognised by the awarding of a small prize at our leavers assembly.

Links with Other Policies - This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding 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
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