



Ingleby Mill Primary School

Attendance Policy and Procedures

Reviewed by staff:	November 2015
Due to be reviewed:	November 2018

Statement of Intent

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. Securing it is therefore a high priority of Ingleby Mill Primary School, its governors, parents and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils lessen the impact of the education provided for them. Pupil absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching for themselves and others.

The aim of the school is to facilitate their student's regular and sustained attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all their students.

All partners have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

School Attendance the Statutory Framework

Education Act 1944 - Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 - Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on the Local Education Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 (amended) provides the new registration categories of Approved Educational Activity. (Amending Regulation 3(2), (3), (5) of the Education Regulations 1995).

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 amend the 2006 regulation. From 1st September 2013 all reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days is removed. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

At Ingleby Mill, we define exceptional circumstances as:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where evidence is provided that the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in term time. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the company or organisation.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence should be provided.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- Attending a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003).

Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of **each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent**. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is **authorised or unauthorised**. This is done electronically. The registers are taken at the start of the first session at 9 a.m. and the start of the second session at 12.45p.m for EYFS and KS1, and 1.10pm for KS2. Teachers should complete the registers in the first 5 minutes of the two sessions. Registers will be saved and shut down immediately after they are taken. Pupils present will be marked by a diagonal line. Pupils not present will be marked by an N.

The School Business Manager, with the assistance of office staff, has primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils in each registration group, for collecting information explaining absences, for maintaining an accurate register and for contacting home to obtain reasons for attendance and punctuality.

Lateness

It is school policy to record **a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place**, but before the close of the registers (9.30 a.m.)

Pupils arriving late can seriously disrupt their work and that of others. School policy is to **encourage punctuality**. Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Students will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

It is school's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional transport difficulties), registers may be kept open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

Where a pupil does arrive and misses registration, his or her presence on site will need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation.

In responding to lateness, we will of course, take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason will be monitored and if required will be reported initially to the headteacher or

senior manager of that key stage. If this does not appear successful then parents will be invited into school to discuss the situation. Further action may include the involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Absence

Once the school receives an acceptable reason for an absence, it will be authorised by inserting the correct symbol. Reporting by telephone, verbally to a member of staff or a note are all acceptable. If **after two weeks** no satisfactory reason has been given the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to agree to it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve the LA Attendance Officer at an early opportunity.

Occasionally, there are instances where there is an excessive amount of authorised absence; this can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection; the school will be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. The school may authorise absence retrospectively where satisfied as to the explanation offered. **Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.**

Holidays in term time

Guidance from the Government has been altered (September 2013) so that Head Teachers do not have the power to authorise term-time absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents do not have an automatic right to demand holidays for their children. Any application for leave of absence should be made in advance and in writing to the Head teacher.

A response to an application for absence will be made within 10 working days. Even in exceptional circumstances, the school will not authorise term-time holiday for children whose attendance over the previous year has caused concerns (under 95%).

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, says:

"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, her parent is guilty of an offence".

If the reasons given for your child's irregular school attendance are not satisfactory, or if your child doesn't attend school when holidays have been unauthorised then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to **£120** fine
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

It is expected that pupils:

- Will attend school regularly.
- Will arrive on time.
- Will be prepared for the demands of that day.
- Will feel comfortable in chatting to a member of staff if they are experiencing problems at home which may affect their attendance

Parents/Carers

It is expected that parents/carers ensure:

- Their child attends school.
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.
- Their child arrives at school punctually.
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day.

Intervention at School Level

Stage 1 - Monitor

This section describes the role of school in relation to improving attendance.

1.1 The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for taking the school register and for entering into the electronic register any notes explaining absences.

1.2 After the close of registers, the school office will begin the First Response procedure where children who are absent without known reason are contacted; this is to ensure, in the first case, that they are safe. Any late pupils will be marked by the school office as late on the register.

1.3 The Class Teacher can do much to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. If a teacher is concerned about absence, then the pupil is referred to the Head Teacher.

Children whose attendance falls below 90% will be tracked.

Stage 2 - Attendance Concerns

2.1 Home will be contacted, preferably by phone in the first instance; this will be done by the school office.

2.2 A record should be kept of all contact and conversations on the electronic register.

2.3 Parents/carers are encouraged to visit school to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement - it is important to establish the reasons for poor attendance (general health, home circumstances etc.)

2.4 Through the discussions, a target to help improve the attendance will be agreed

2.5 A date for review of attendance will be set, no more than 4 weeks later.

2.6 If attendance has improved, then a letter of commendation will be sent home and pupil returns to STAGE 1.

2.7 If attendance has not improved, then options may include:

(i) Contact home to discuss the review and set a further review date.

(ii) Discuss with the parent areas of concerns and where other support might be appropriate.

2.8 A prioritised list of pupils will be referred to the Attendance and Exclusion Team and action requested from the LA Attendance Officer where appropriate.

When making a referral to the school's Attendance Officer, it is important that the following information is included:

- Action taken to date by the school.
- A print out of the pupil's attendance.
- Parent's/pupil's attitudes towards school and the school's intervention.
- Parental reasons for non-attendance.
- Action taken by school to resolve any identified problems.
- Information regarding any special educational needs the pupil may have, academic attainments and support being provided by the school.
- Information regarding potential aggression from the parents.

Details of the procedure followed by the Attendance and Exclusion Team may be found in the Local Authority's website and documentation.