



ATTENDANCE POLICY

PART 1 - Aims

At Iqra Primary school we have the highest expectations across all areas of school life including attendance. We value positive relationships between both staff and pupils, and want all pupils to feel they belong here and are valued. We work with our pupils to ensure that they have the highest possible attendance at school. We believe that this is the best way for them to succeed and to get the most out of all we have to offer.

There is a clear link between academic outcomes and school attendance. We want all pupils to achieve excellent outcomes to give themselves the very best chance in life. Our school culture and ethos enable our school to meet their obligation with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting and valuing good attendance with high expectations.
- 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, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality to school and lessons.

Introduction

This is a successful school, and all pupils play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve their best. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore, that parents make sure that children attend regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance is your legal responsibility.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



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It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance. We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory² school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The principles of a 'support first approach' are adopted as set out in DFE Guidance – Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 and we seek to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.



Health Guidance

There is wide agreement among health professionals and educational professionals that school attendance is vital to the life chances of children and young people. Being in school improves health, wellbeing and socialisation throughout the life course. The greatest benefits come from children and young people attending school regularly. It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. The NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance offers further information on mild illnesses in relations to school attendance. Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that more children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety than before the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it. DfE has published useful guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance at [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupil-s-attendance-guidance-for-schools) and those who are experiencing persistent symptoms can be encouraged to access additional support.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular. We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend.

We will also make available the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition. Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015', 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013'.

Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how, what might seem like just a few days absence, can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform



the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data, including the DfE's View Your Education Data platform, is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance: *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore, will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance
- the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School Governing Body

The Governing Body for the school is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance and punctuality across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance/punctuality data.
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality figures for the whole school.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the school.



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- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance/punctuality.
- Holding the Headteachers of the schools to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher of the school

The Headteacher of the school is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring school-level absence/punctuality data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance/punctuality of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance/punctuality strategies
- Liaising with the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Designated Attendance Officer

The Designated Attendance Officer (details on school website) alongside the Headteacher are responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for approving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they're followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress including the efficiency of the school's strategies and processes
- Leading attendance/punctuality across their school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance/punctuality improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance/punctuality identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance/punctuality issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils/students and families
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher when to liaise with the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL (named on the school website) is responsible for:

- Monitoring the correlation between persistent and severe absence in relation to safeguarding.
- Liaising with the Designated Attendance Officer, where appropriate, regarding interventions and actions taken to support specific pupils.

Class Teachers are responsible for:



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- Recording attendance for morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office (see Part Two).

School Office Staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers and pupils/students about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers and pupils/students to the relevant member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before the time the school states (in Part Two of this policy) on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside the school day

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register via SIMS and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and again during a second session in the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- On time.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- 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.

Pupils who are absent from school but who are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.



Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence. Please see Part Two of this policy for the school's specific procedure.

All schools will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. See Part Two of this policy for how parents/carers should request leaves of absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

See Part Two of this policy for information about how the school identifies and responds to ongoing punctuality issues.

Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call and email the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the DSL may contact other relevant agencies.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an LA Education Officer.



Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. For more information, see Part Two of this policy.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-time Absence

Leave of absence, during term time, would not be granted, unless 'exceptional circumstances' prevail. The Headteacher determines the number of school days a student can be away from school, if they grant a leave request because of 'exceptional circumstances' which are circumstances that are rare, significant, short and unavoidable during term time. The following reasons may be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- Illness: where a pupil is considered too ill to attend school.
- Unavoidable medical appointment.
- Recognised religious observance: a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong.
- Funerals.
- Traumatic events.

Where absences relating to funerals and traumatic events are authorised, they are only for the event and minimum travelling time, not for an extended leave.

Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell.
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill.
- Oversleeping.
- Inadequate clothing/uniform.
- Confusion over school dates.
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons.
- Child's/family birthday.
- Shopping trip.
- Family holidays.

When absence becomes a concern, parents/carers may be required to provide medical evidence for any further absence of their child. Failure to provide medical evidence will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).



Legal Sanctions

The school or Local Authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or Penalty Notice, each parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. Full details of fines can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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.

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

Attendance Monitoring

Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Local School Board.

Analysing Attendance

The schools will:

- Analyse attendance and absence/punctuality data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance/punctuality, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence/punctuality, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.



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- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing body and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils/students, where appropriate.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
 - Listen and understand barriers to attendance.
 - Explain the help that is available.
 - Explain the potential consequences of and sanctions for persistent and severe absence.
 - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance/punctuality
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Implement sanctions where necessary.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.



PART TWO

Class teachers will take the morning and afternoon registers the following school sessions times:

KS1

Morning session: 8.30am – 11:45pm

Afternoon session: 12:30pm – 3.00pm

KS2

Morning session: 8.30am – 12:30pm

Afternoon session: 1:15pm – 3.00pm

Lateness, Punctuality, Planned and Unplanned Absence

A parent should accompany pupils arriving after 8.50am to enter the school via the school office to be signed in. Any pupils arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late before the register closes (L). The register will close at 9.00am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (code U), which will count as an unauthorised absence.

A pattern of late attendance or regular late attendance will be investigated. In the first instance, the parents will be called to request a meeting. Help and advice will be offered, and attendance for that child will be monitored. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attends our school regularly and arrives on time. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school for an unplanned absence via the school office whenever the child is absent and on each subsequent day of absence before 9am.

Please leave a message with the following information:

- Your name;
- Your child's name
- Your child's class;
- The reason for absence.
- If you are advising of illness, please include details.

If this does not happen, the school will contact the home to ascertain why the pupil is absent. This is a safeguarding issue, so all parties know your child is safe.

Request for Absence (planned absence)

For a planned absence, it is the parent's responsibility to request a leave of absence via the school office for the attention of the Head of School as far in advance as possible. If you are notifying the school of a forthcoming appointment, please include the time your child will be collected. Proof of the appointment (medical card/appointment letter) should be provided. The school office will make copies of medical appointments.



Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- The school target is for pupils to achieve 95% attendance. The school regularly informs parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- 96-100% attendance – The Attendance Officer will award pupils for their attendance achievements
- 90 - 95% attendance – The Attendance Officer will monitor and notify the Headteacher of concerns. The Attendance Officer will write to parents highlighting the percentage of absence. This may be followed up with school meetings with the class teacher.
- Regular minor absences – The Attendance Officer will write to parents highlighting the percentage of absence and investigate and inform the Headteacher of concerns. This may be followed up with school meetings with the class teacher.
- If your child's attendance falls below 90%, the Headteacher may refuse to authorise further absences without confirmation of illness from the Health Services (appointment card, prescription, etc). If the situation does not improve, the Headteacher will invite parents or guardians for a meeting to discuss the issues and may involve the School Nurse.
- A Penalty Notice will be issued after ten consecutive sessions of absence in any one term.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

At our school, we promote and reward attendance using the following strategies:

- Attendance tables and weekly winners will be displayed in the school and included in weekly assemblies, including Friday Class Assembly
- Certificates - termly and yearly certificates awarded for 100% attendance.
- Regular information is sent to parents
- Attendance is promoted at Curriculum information events, Meet the Teacher events throughout the year so that all parents are fully informed of attendance expectations.
- Termly attendance bulletin – an attendance notice that includes facts about the impact of low attendance and praise to classes with improved attendance.

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance, and pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

We will have sensitive conversations with children and families who face complex barriers to attendance and work with them to provide support. We will use resources provided by partner agencies within Slough to remove in school barriers for children experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

If all other options to ensure a child receives full-time education have been considered in exceptional circumstances, we will request a reduced timetable.

- This can be used to help a child transition back into school after a prolonged absence due to school refusal or non-attendance because of mental or physical health issues.
- As a temporary arrangement to address and manage the child's complex barriers while alternative plans are put in place to meet the child's needs.



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Document Management

Approval Body	Governing Body/Chair of Governors
Date Approved: Review	Sept 2025
Colleague Responsible	HT
Next Review	Sept 2027
Period/Frequency	Every 2 years