



Ickniel Walk First School

Attendance and Absence Policy

Date policy last reviewed: October 24

Signed by:

_____ Head Teacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

Contact the office to let the school know about your child's attendance on a day to day basis:

admin@icknielwalk.herts.sch.uk

01763 243392

If you are having difficulties ensuring that your child attends school regularly, you should talk directly to the staff at the school. Please do this sooner rather than later. We will do our best to help you.

Statement of intent

At Icknield Walk First School we believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Where parents/carers have decided to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents/carers.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent/carers of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

1. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing in Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The head teacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents/carers and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for illness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed

- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason
- A pupil who has missed more than 50% across the year is defined as severely absent

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

3. Attendance Expectations

Doors open

- Pupils should not arrive at school before 8.35am (unless they are attending breakfast club or nursery).
- Doors will open in all classrooms Reception to Year 4 at 8.40am.

Registration

- Registers are closed at 8.45am and at 1.15pm. Registers are marked consistently by staff.
- Any pupil arriving after the register has been closed but before 9.15am will be marked as 'late'.
- Any pupil arriving after 9.15am will be marked as absent for the whole of the session.
- For the afternoon session, any pupil arriving after 1.30pm will be marked as absent for that session.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance.

(timings as above unless advertised differently in the newsletter for specific reasons)

Lateness

- Classroom doors will be shut at 8.45am, anyone arriving after 8.45am needs to sign in at the office.
- The gates will be locked at 9.00am, anyone arriving after this time will need to phone the school office to gain access via the front gate on Poplar Close; the office staff will sign your child on site.

Following up lateness

- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by the Head Teacher, who will work with the parents/carers to bring about an improvement in punctuality involving multi-agency services where appropriate.

4. Absence procedures

Absences

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school. This must be through a telephone call or email before 9.15am on the first day of absence. Please note that if the absence is ongoing, we may contact you again to discuss the absence.
- Absences are authorised by the Head Teacher
- The school may decide not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided
- The school will check up on any absences where a reason has not been notified
- In the event that parents/carers cannot be contacted, the office staff will contact the numbers on the emergency contact list. If we still do not have a reason for absence after a call to the final contact number, we will then consider a home welfare visit or alerting the Local Authority and Children's Services

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- The school may request medical evidence in some cases, such as where the child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons.

If the absence continues, we may:

- Contact you if your child's attendance is below 96% and causing concern
- Arrange a meeting with you so that you can discuss the situation with either the emotional wellbeing mentor and/or the head teacher.

- Consider reasonable adjustments or additional support.
- Create a personalised support plan to address the barriers to attendance as much as possible.
- Signpost you to support from other agencies
- Seek guidance from the Local Authority Statutory Attendance Support Team

Where a pupil is absent for more than 10 school days in a year either consecutively or irregularly and these absences have been unauthorised or unexplained, the local authority must be informed by the school.

The local authority must also be informed of any pupils who are absent from school where pupils are coded I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help the school agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs.

How we manage lateness:

Parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher where the child has persistent lateness. But parents/carers can approach us at any time if they have trouble getting their child to school on time. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school seeking advice and guidance from the Local Authority.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures - summary

Icknield Walk First School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. The office staff monitor daily attendance and talk to class teacher and head teacher about any concerns.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the head teacher.
3. Contact is made with parents/carers on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the head teacher daily. This may result in a home visit.
4. Contact is made to the parents/carers of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, this will be raised by the class teacher at parent's/carer's evenings or in an informal conversation at the end of the school day.
6. If a child is frequently late a parents/carers may be asked to meet with the head teacher.
7. If a pupil's attendance drops below 85 percent, the parents/carers will be called to a formal meeting with the head teacher.
8. If attendance does not improve, a referral may be required to the Local Authority Statutory Attendance Support Team.

5. Authorising parental/carer absence requests

Parents/carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the head teacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the head teacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The head teacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents/carers and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents/carers to contact the head teacher in writing at least a week prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave are very unlikely to be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parent/carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

Religious observance

Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents/carers for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents/carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent/carer belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent/carer will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

6. SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.

- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

7. Working with parents/carers to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents/carers and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents/carers will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the head teacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents/carers are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the head teacher will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents/carers to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the head teacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. SENCO, will work together to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents/carers to access support that they may need.

8. Monitoring and analysing absence

The head teacher will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The head teacher will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a termly basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, via the head teacher's report.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and

national level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

9. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent/carer the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent/carer the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent /carer who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

10. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 97%