

Icknield School

Attendance policy

‘Children with special needs have the right to special care.’
Article 23 UNCRC

‘Children have the right to an education.’ Article 28 UNCRC

Icknield School... “your journey matters”

Icknield School Values Statement

Icknield School is passionate about providing an inclusive education. We value all students as unique and nurture their talents. We enable students to achieve to their best ability in a safe environment and to grow into the finest individuals they can be.

Our inclusive practice can be defined as attitudes, approaches and strategies taken to ensure that all our pupils are included in the learning environment. We ensure that all pupils are listened to, openly valued, safe and have the confidence to participate in all activities.

Icknield School strives to remove barriers to learning, to celebrate diversity and through this we encourage and support a society of equality, acceptance and mutual respect.

By valuing and respecting human diversity, Icknield School fosters a sense of community and belonging, enabling all: children, teenagers and adults, to participate in every area of life possible.

Policy approved and adopted: September 2020

Person(s) responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy:

Headteacher :- Sean Cannon

Due for review: September 2026

National guidance

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the

Department for Education and Hampshire County Council. This Attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- Teaching & Learning
- Behaviour

The level of attendance & punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's home-school agreement which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via the school website.

Rationale / Statement of Intent:

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. However, at Icknield School the special and individual needs of our children are taken into account when authorising absence for medical appointments and respite.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting school attendance and punctuality for all.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is important your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality support the development of their understanding of time. Regular attendance at school also provides a sense of security, reducing anxiety and promoting positive behaviour.

Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school,

parents and the child. It is important that home and school work together to achieve this as set out in the Home/School agreement.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

Ensure that all students are registered accurately

- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone, dojo or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Give reasons which would benefit the individual pupil when requesting a leave of absence

3.1. Lateness /Punctuality

- The school day begins at **9.15 am** and all **pupils are expected to be in school as soon as possible after that time.**
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary. We recognise that many of our pupils are transported to school by taxi's and mini-buses and that lateness may sometimes be outside of the pupil's control.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the school or the Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 6 of this policy for further detail).

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after school club and provide the parent/Carer with the bill

3.2 Recording Attendance:

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day by 9:30am and again for the afternoon session by 13:30 pm.

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

First Day Absence

Parents should contact the school on the morning of a child's first absence by telephone if possible or by note given to transport escort. Office staff will telephone parents by midday on the first day of absence if there has been no communication from the home.

Third Day Absence

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with Icknield School by any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family

Ten Day's Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If a pupil misses 10% (3 weeks / 21 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Where this absence is authorised the school will regard each case on an individual basis taking into account health and medical needs of the pupil.

Request for Leave of Absence:

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday, however at Icknield School we would consider each request on an individual basis taking into account the needs of each child and their family. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from Icknield School office) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down action in accordance the code (see the relevant section for detail).

Understanding types of absence – Authorised & Unauthorised:

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures:

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

- 1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance**
- 2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in any continuous 100 session period, and parents are complicit in the child's absence.**

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

7.1 If a child is reluctant to come to school

If a child is reluctant to come to school we will recommend a visit from the family support worker in the first instance to plan for successful school attendance.

7.2 Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

7.3 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school

For further advice and guidance on Attendance & GRT and Showman see County Guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>

Further support & Guidance is available from Hampshire's EMTAS Service

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>