Attendance policy

Ivy House School

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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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

It also refers to:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

Ivy House School recognises improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

3.1 Working together to improve attendance

We will adopt the following processes when responding to attendance issues:

- 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.
- Sanctions – consider what sanctions are available to respond, where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with.

3.2 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- 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

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- 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 as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
  - Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.3 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- 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

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion'), who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead, is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
    - The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Raffaella Merolla and can be contacted via Raffaella.merolla@ivyhouseschool.co.uk

3.5 The attendance officer

The attendance officer is Vicki Green can be contacted via info@ivyhouseschool.co.uk

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Including within any "Attendance Return" to the local authority at the agreed interval (which should not be any less often than once per calendar month) the names and addresses of any pupil of compulsory school age who:
    - fails to attend school regularly; or
    - has been absent for a continuous period of at least ten school days where on those days their absence is recorded in the register exclusively using one or more of codes G, N, O or U as set out at Appendix 1.
- Making to the local authority a "Sickness Return" as soon as possible which provides the full name and address of a registered pupil of compulsory school age if:
    - the pupil is recorded in the register using code I as set out at Appendix 1; and

- the school has reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will be unable to attend because of sickness for at least 15 consecutive days, or will be or will have been unable to attend because of sickness for a total of at least 15 school days during the school year, whether consecutive or not.

3.5.1 Attendance and safeguarding

The attendance officer / class teacher will inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL as soon as possible when a child, with existing safeguarding concerns, does not attend school.

Where there are concerns that an absence may indicate a child protection concern, the attendance officer / class teacher will inform the DSL or Deputy DSL as per the school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

3.6 [Class teachers/form tutors]

[Class teachers] are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by 9am and after lunch by 2pm.

3.7 School [admin/office] staff

School [office] staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Deputy Head where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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 1 emergency contact number for their child and make sure this is kept up to date.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic, the most appropriate person at school will:

  a) Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

b) Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence and their parents to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support and advice will be taken from the designated safeguarding lead where necessary. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, 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 once during the second 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

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

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 8.35am and ends at 3.30pm for KS1 and 4pm for Nursery and KS2.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.35am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken from 1pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school [office] staff, who can be contacted via vicki.green@ivyhouseschool.co.uk or 020 3869 3070

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine and reasonable concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are genuine and reasonable doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school has genuine and reasonable doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance if an appropriate request for medical evidence is not satisfied.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

This should be made via email to the school office and the class teacher copied in.

However, we encourage parents 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 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.

4.4 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

Where there is persistent lateness, parents are informed and the school endeavours to support the family to improve the punctuality.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Where there are existing safeguarding concerns, the DSL MUST be informed of the absence.
- Call the pupil's parent 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 school may contact police
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: [issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate]

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels [e.g. via termly written reports].

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

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 as determined by the headteacher in their absolute discretion taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

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

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

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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 [3 weeks] before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – where the pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. The school will not unnecessarily ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this will only happen when there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. A parent should inform the school in advance of the need to travel for occupational purposes.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to,– to tackle poor attendance.

- 1ST warning letter sent from Head of School to parents.
- Formal absence meeting to discuss action plan regarding attendance rate.
- Contacting Social Services for advice on a Child Missing Education threshold.

Where information about a pupil's attendance is requested by their new school after they leave our school, our school may choose to confirm:

- the number of instances of unauthorised absence whilst the pupil was on the roll of any Inspired Education Group school;
- the dates of those unauthorised absences; and
- whether any sanctions have been issued to the pupil by any Inspired Education Group school either in whole or in part because of that pupil's attendance.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

School attendance is celebrated through morning registration notices, the Ivy Weekly and in assemblies.

- • Attendance and lateness will appear on the front of student's bi-annual reports
- • Parents of children with poor attendance are invited into school to discuss how to
- improve their child's attendance and create an action plan.
- • Regular reminders in the Ivy Weekly of the importance of attendance and

being on time for school.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where a student is struggling to attend to school, the school will work with the family to create a plan to encourage the student to engage in school life

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a student is unable to attend school due to mental or physical ill health or SEND a plan would be created in conjunction with the parents to ensure the student is able to stay on track with their studies. Work could be set on Teams and Class teachers would regularly reach out to the student and their family.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a student is returning to school after a lengthy period of absence, the school would create a back to school plan and timetable to ensure the day is manageable for the student. The plan would be created in conjunction with the parents. Where necessary, a risk assessment could be put in place.

8. Attendance monitoring

Explain how your school monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality data), and systematically and regularly analyses it.

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Understand any blocks to attendance for children with SEND.
- Review attendance for children where there are current safeguarding risks and share information with partner agencies where relevant.

8.3 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
- 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 severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachersto facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding 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, where appropriate

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who 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, in conjunction with the local authority Attendance and Early Help services, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Deputy Head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour 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: • 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