



Attendance Policy

About this policy

Date of last review: 1.07.2021

Date of next review: 1.07.2022

Introduction

Inkersall Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

Pupil attendance data is monitored against categories including race, gender and disability, and the school will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Inkersall Primary Academy, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Aims and Objectives

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The Attendance policy is designed to support good attendance in school.

Policy implementation

All staff at Inkersall Primary Academy have a role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. Staff will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel that they are valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The Principal is responsible for directing and coordinating the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Education Welfare Manager is responsible for ensuring that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, is made available to all staff, pupils and parents, and that attendance matters will be reported weekly against targets. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 a parent is guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

Any person who has the care of a child or who has parental responsibility is responsible for ensuring good attendance. Failure to do so may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued or prosecution.

98% - 100%	95% - 98%	90% - 95%	75% - 90%	Below 75%
Excellent	Good	Worrying	Serious Concern	Serious Concern
190 Days of Education	180 Days of Education	171 Days of Education	161 Days of Education	143 Days of Education
Your child has the best chance to succeed	10 days absence / 20 sessions am/pm have been missed	19 days absence / 38 sessions am/pm have been missed <i>Your child will struggle to keep up. Makes it harder to made progress</i>	29 days absence / 58 sessions am/pm have been missed <i>Legal action will be considered</i>	47 days absence / 94 sessions am/pm have been missed <i>Court action!</i>

Please don't let your child miss out on the education they deserve.

Categories of absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the School as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the School at a later stage, the register will be amended. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Principal.

Inkersall Primary Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. **It is Inkersall's expectation that all students will achieve at least 96% attendance.**

The school recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence and can render children vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff are encouraged to challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and to encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

A note or explanation from a pupil's home will not necessarily mean an absence will become authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances, where leave has been granted by the school in advance:

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;

- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered;
- where the School is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible; to return their child to school immediately afterwards and/or to bring him or her to school beforehand;
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a strictly limited period

Any absence falling outside of these categories will be considered as unauthorised.

- Examples of reasons for declining to consider an absence as authorised include:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
- the pupil has been identified during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a reason for the absence.

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the School will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

Strategies for managing and improving attendance

The importance of attendance meeting target is regularly discussed at Inkersall Primary Academy, including in assemblies and classes. Parents are reminded regularly of the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are shared with pupils and parents. We also report every child's attendance figures to parents three times a year. Pupils whose attendance is good or better receive regular praise and rewards. We identify those pupils who have attended school every day, and use figures to create aggregate class scores which entitle children to extra recognition in school.

The academy has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Students with attendance below 90% may fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. This will be of additional concern if any of the child's absences are unauthorised, and will be shared with the local authority according.

First Day Calling

Inkersall uses a system of first-day calling. Parents receive a text message and if non-responsive or uncontactable through text will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence or to reach any alternative contacts listed, the School will text and/or phone every day of the absence. Any case of concern will be shared with the Education Welfare Manager.

Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a calendar month (or shorter period if staff are concerned), with or without explanation, the Education Welfare Manager will invite parents to an 'Attendance Panel Meeting' with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans will be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit, usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

If there continues to be concerns about absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), or if attendance falls below 90%, the Education Welfare Manager may make a referral to the Community Public Health Nursing Service or other appropriate external agencies.

Should absence due to medical or ill health be a cause for concern, the Education Welfare Manager will inform the parents/carers in writing that medical evidence will be required if their child is absent. Referrals to Education Welfare will be made wherever this is felt appropriate by the school.

Responsibility of parents/carers

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child receives full-time education. Unless a parent/carer can show that they are providing this themselves, they must ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Parents/carers will be committing an offence, therefore, if their child fails to attend regularly and punctually and the school has not given permission for the absence or late arrival.

Inkersall Primary Academy expects that parents and carers will:

- ensure children attend the school regularly and punctually;
- support children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, nor condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents and carers are expected to observe the attendance reporting process, including by:

- notifying Inkersall Primary Academy on the first day of absence, by telephoning the School before 9.00 am, or by speaking to the school office staff whilst dropping off siblings;
- ensuring children arrive at school on time at the beginning of the school day at 8:55 am, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- ensuring children are collected on time at the end of the school day at 3.15 pm;

- working in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so and taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contacting the School without delay if they are concerned about any aspect of their children's school lives - Inkersall Primary Academy will endeavour to support parents to address any concerns raised with the school in this way.

Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school for registration, on time every day. They will be recorded as late if they arrive after 9:05am. It is disruptive to children's own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes at 9:30am, will be marked as late for the session (a session being a morning or an afternoon) which will result in an unauthorised absence. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the school Education Welfare Manager.

Pupils who arrive late for School but before the register closes are monitored for frequency of lateness. If the lateness is persistent, the parents will be requested to give adequate reason, and if this is not sufficient to resolve the problem, the school Education Welfare Manager will be informed.

Sign in and sign out procedure

Pupils arriving late must report to the main school office so that an accurate record of presence on site may be maintained. Pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day must also report to the main office. Parents must sign their child out of school before they are allowed to leave the premises.

Late Collection

School staff understand that occasionally delays are unavoidable, however the academy takes persistent lateness in collecting a child very seriously. In extreme cases it may be considered as abandonment or neglect of the child.

In the event of a child not being collected at the end of the school day, the school will make every effort to contact the child's parents or carers. If this proves to be impossible, school staff will try to get in touch with an alternative named contact, authorised by the child's parents or carers to collect them on their behalf.

If no contact can be made within an hour of the end of the school day, the school will have no alternative but to contact Children's Services to inform them that we have an uncollected child on the premises.

Late Collection Procedures

3.15pm: parents collect their child/children from the gate or corridor where the class is released

3.30pm: all children who have not been collected reported to the office where an initial telephone call is made. If a message has to be left because the call has not been answered, a text message will also be sent. This will be logged on the Late Collection form. Children are accommodated in the in the Principal's office with the Principal or another member of the Senior Leadership Team

3.45pm: if the children have still not been collected, a further telephone call will be made, followed by a text if the call is not answered. This will be logged on the Late Collection form

4.00pm: staff will continue to contact parents at reasonable time intervals should the child have still not been collected

4.15pm: If a child has not been collected by this time, the incident will be logged as a safeguarding concern and Children's Services informed.

If children are repeatedly collected late without reasonable cause, a letter will be sent to parents. If children continue to be collected late on a persistent basis, a referral to Children's Services may be made.

The time a child is collected from school will be recorded on the Late Collection form together with the reason why the parent is late. The form is to be signed by both parent/carer and a staff member.

Leave of Absence

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Requests for any leave of absence should be made in writing prior to taking the leave. Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. The school will respond to each application on an individual basis in writing, explaining why the leave of absence is authorised or not authorised and if the school therefore intends to apply for a fixed penalty notice.

A service request to the Education Welfare Service will be made if a child goes on holiday or leave of absence without authorisation from the Principal and there are no exceptional circumstances for the absence. This is trust policy, and is not at the discretion of the school.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

A penalty notice will be issued regardless of the child's previous attendance

A penalty notice will be issued without warning.

There is no right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued.

Monitoring and Review

Roles and responsibilities

The **Attendance Officer** will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. Data will inform future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection. Data will be segregated by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance and analysed against trends according.

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation; for liaison with the Governing Body, parents/ carers and appropriate outside agencies and for the appointment of the Education Welfare Manager who will have responsibility for the handling of the daily implementation of the policy.

The **Local Governing Body** makes arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the School are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the School. It is the responsibility of the LGB to monitor attendance data and any concerns or evaluations reported.

APPENDIX A

REGISTRATION CODES

Code / \ Present in school / = am \ = pm

Code B Off-site educational activity

Code C Leave of absence authorised by the school

Code D Dual registered – at another educational establishment

Code E Excluded but no alternative provision made

Code G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher

Code H Holiday authorised by the school

Code I Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Code J At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

Code L Late arrival before the register has closed

Code M Medical or dental appointment

Code P Participating in a supervised sporting activity

Code R Religious observance

Code S Study leave

Code T Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Code V Educational visit or trip

Code W Work experience

Code # Planned whole or partial school closure

APPENDIX B

PENALTY NOTICES

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Derbyshire County Council Children's Services

Q. What is the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003?

The Act gives powers to local authorities, schools and the police to issue penalty notices to parents or carers for their child's non-attendance at school.

Q. Why have penalty notices been introduced?

Reducing absence from school is very important. This is because missing school can damage children's achievements, disrupt the school's routines and affect other children's learning. It can also leave children at risk of anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing out on the opportunities provided in school can have a long-term effect on children's chances in life.

Q. What are my responsibilities as a parent?

You have a legal duty to ensure that your child receives full-time education[1]. Unless you can show that you are providing this yourself, you must ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time. You will be committing an offence, therefore, if your child fails to attend regularly and punctually and the school has not given permission for the absence or late arrival.

Remember - only your child's school can authorise absence or late arrival.

If you fail to make sure that your child attends regularly and punctually, you may be prosecuted in court. The penalties are severe and, in serious cases, may result in a prison sentence.

Q. What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution. It requires the parent to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's non-attendance and avoids court proceedings. It is intended to secure better attendance without taking legal action through the courts.

Q. What are the penalty costs?

The fine is £120 to be paid within 28 days. The 28 days starts two days after the date of issue as shown on the notice. If the fine is paid within 21 days, payment reduces to £60.

PLEASE BE AWARE when two parents/carers are issued with a penalty notice for the same child both penalty notices must be paid. The fine will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually.

For example, in a family where there are two parents who fail to ensure proper attendance of their child, the fine would be £120 for each parent.

Q. Who is counted as the parent responsible for ensuring attendance?

The law defines a parent as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, even if not married, has responsibility as a parent
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Having care of a child or young person means that if the child or young person lives with you and is cared for by you then you will be regarded as the parent irrespective of what your relationship is with the child.

Q. How are they issued?

A penalty notice will normally be sent by first class post to your home.

Q. When are they used?

Penalty notices can be used in a wide range of situations, including but not limited to circumstances:

- Where it is clear that parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- Where parents take their child on holiday during term-time without the written permission of the headteacher.

Q. Is a warning given?

A formal written warning will usually be given in the first circumstance, but there will be certain circumstances where you will not be given a formal written warning. For example, if you have taken your child on holiday in term-time without the authorisation of the headteacher.

Q. What happens if I receive a warning letter?

The warning letter will tell you how many school sessions your child has missed and give you a minimum of 15 school days to improve your child's attendance. If there is no significant improvement, a penalty notice will be issued.

We never take such action lightly and would prefer to work with parents or carers to improve attendance without having to enforce it. However, we will use these powers to ensure that your child attends school.

Q. What does the law say regarding holidays in term-time?

The law makes it clear that the headteacher should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. ²

Parents are not entitled to take their children on holiday in term-time. Such holidays can only be taken with the written approval of the headteacher. Each case will be considered on its own merits and the decision of the headteacher is final.

Please remember that holidays taken in term-time without the headteacher's approval may result in:

- Each parent receiving a penalty notice for each child for each period of absence
- A penalty notice will be issued regardless of the child's previous attendance
- A penalty notice will be issued without warning

Taking or allowing your child to take a holiday in term-time without the school's permission is a serious matter. If we find that you have done so, we will not hesitate to issue a penalty notice.

Q. Can I appeal?

There is no right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued.

We can take back a penalty notice but only if:

- It should not have been issued in the first place (for example, if your child was actually at school); or
- It has been issued to the wrong person; or
- It appears to Derbyshire County Council that the notice contains material errors.

If you believe that any of the above circumstances apply, you should contact Derbyshire County Council immediately with evidence to support your view. The contact details will be included in the penalty notice.

Q. How do I pay?

Details of how to pay will be included in the penalty notice. Please remember that there will be no reminder to pay and no opportunity to pay in instalments. Failure to pay within the timescales as specified in the penalty notice will result in prosecution.

Q. What happens if I do not pay?

If you do not pay, the consequences can be very serious. You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the penalty notice in full. After this time, if it has not been paid, Derbyshire County Council is required by law to begin proceedings in the magistrates' court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

2 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

If proven, this can attract a range of fines of up to £2500, and may include other remedies such as parenting orders, community sentences, or imprisonment, depending on the circumstances. A guilty verdict will also mean that you will have a criminal record.

All this can be avoided by payment in full by the due date.

Q. Can I be prosecuted if I pay but my child still fails to attend school?

You cannot be prosecuted for the period included in the penalty notice. However, you can be prosecuted for any further periods of non-attendance not covered by the penalty notice, depending on the circumstances.

[1] The law states that education must be *“efficient, full-time and suitable to the child’s age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)*