



Attendance Policy

November 2025

1. Rationale

Ickford School places significant emphasis on attendance and punctuality and expects all parents to embrace this ethos. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all pupils have full access to the curriculum and achieve their full potential as learners. Valuable learning time is lost when pupils are absent or late and it causes disruption to the curriculum for other children.

Ickford School expects all parents and guardians to work in close partnership with it in order to achieve high levels of attendance and good punctuality. Parents and guardians must be made aware that failure to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil is a criminal offence.

In line with DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (2024), attendance is a safeguarding priority. Unexplained or concerning patterns of absence may indicate a safeguarding concern and will be followed up in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and KCSIE (2024).

The school will challenge absence and poor punctuality in line with statutory guidance and will intervene where attendance causes concern, including at 95%, 90% (persistent absence) and 50% (severe absence). The previous threshold of 97% has been removed as it is not required by DfE guidance.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022, updated 2024) *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*
- DfE (2024) *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- DfE (2016) *Children Missing Education*
- DfE (2023) *Providing Remote Education*
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
- Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR

Attendance is also monitored under the school's safeguarding duties defined in Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- to define the responsibility of pupils
- to define the role of parents and guardians
- to define the role of the local authority

- to define the role of class teachers/form tutors in relation to attendance and lateness
- to define the duties of the designated member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality (attendance officer/Headteacher)
- to provide guidelines for dealing with truancy
- to provide guidelines regarding holidays during term time
- to clarify how attendance will be monitored, analysed and reported
- to ensure compliance with DfE statutory guidance (2024)
- to outline safeguarding responsibilities related to attendance

4. Key Definitions (DfE 2024)

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil is defined as persistently absent if their attendance falls below 90%.

Severe Absence:

Attendance below 50%.

Authorised Absence:

Absence approved by the school and recorded using the appropriate code, e.g., illness, medical appointment, religious observance, approved exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence:

Absence not approved by the school. Parents cannot authorise absence.

Children Missing Education (CME):

Children not on roll or not receiving suitable education elsewhere. All CME concerns must follow LA CME procedures.

Safeguarding:

Absence may indicate risk of harm. Any unexplained absence for a child on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan requires immediate escalation.

5. Procedures

5.1 Pupils' Responsibility

Pupils have the following responsibilities in relation to attendance:

- To arrive at school on time and be in their classroom by 9:00am for morning registration and lined up outside their classroom by 1:15pm for afternoon registration. Children who are not with their class at these times but arrive afterwards will be deemed late.
- To follow school routines for entering and exiting the building safely and respectfully.

5.2 Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians have the following role in relation to pupils:

- To ensure that children arrive in school before 9:00am, the start of the school day.
- To ensure that the school has a current telephone number and address where they may be contacted throughout the school day.
- To sign their child in at reception if they arrive after registration.
- To sign their child out at reception if authorised to leave during the school day.
- To notify the school by phone on the first day of absence as early as possible and no later than

9.00am.

- To continue to notify the school by phone on each day of absence before 9.00am.
- Parents must not take their children out of school during term time without prior authorisation from the Headteacher.
- To provide medical evidence where absence is prolonged, recurrent or raises concern.
- To work with the school to implement support plans if attendance becomes a concern.
- To attend meetings with the school and/or LA when required.

5.3 Role of the Local Authority (LA / CAT)

The County Attendance Team acts on behalf of the local authority and is responsible for enforcing attendance for all registered pupils.

The CAT has the following responsibilities:

- To contact parents of pupils with high levels of absence or lateness.
- To act on requests made by the school concerning lack of parental contact on first day of absence.
- To provide support from relevant LA services where needed.
- To issue penalty notices to parents who fail to ensure proper attendance.
- To support schools with Early Help assessments when attendance concerns escalate.
- To process referrals for persistent or severe absence.

5.4 Role of Class Teachers

Class teachers have the following responsibilities:

- To register pupils promptly and accurately for both morning and afternoon sessions.
- To record as late those pupils who arrive after the official start time but before the register closes.
- To record as absent those pupils who are not present when the registers close.
- To ensure pupils who have been absent provide a written or verbal explanation.
- Where a parent fails to provide a valid reason or pupils are persistently late, the matter must be reported to the Headteacher.
- To alert the DSL immediately if absence raises safeguarding concerns.

5.5 Duties of the School Office Staff

The School Office Staff have the following duties:

- To check class registers each morning to note first-day absences and telephone parents by 9.30am.
- To keep records of telephone calls and letters concerning absence.
- To keep all attendance records and parent notes for a minimum of three years.
- To monitor absence and lateness for patterns and identify pupils with low attendance.
- To send reminders to parents to provide updated contact numbers.
- To send letters regarding persistent lateness.
- To inform the Headteacher of persistent lateness or non-attendance and provide a weekly report.
- To initiate safeguarding alert procedures if no contact is made with parents.
- To maintain electronic attendance records in line with statutory data expectations.

5.6 Duties of the Headteacher

The Headteacher has the following duties:

- To liaise with CAT and submit written reports where parents fail to make first-day contact on three

separate occasions.

- To report all unauthorised absences.
- To report pupils whose attendance falls below expectations or who are persistently late.
- To ensure attendance data is included on every pupil's annual progress report.
- To complete and submit the statutory DfE annual attendance return.
- To discourage parents from taking children out of school for odd days or holidays.
- To advise office staff on attendance-related letters.
- To lead the school's attendance strategy and ensure compliance with DfE 2024 guidance.
- To ensure pupils with persistent absence have an attendance support plan.
- To report attendance data to Trustees termly.
- To ensure that attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils (SEND, PP, LAC, CIN/CP) are escalated promptly.

6. Dealing with Truancy

The school takes a serious view of truancy.

- Should a pupil truant from a lesson or series of lessons, the class teacher must inform the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity.
- Parents or guardians will be informed immediately and the school will seek to locate the pupil without delay (not after one hour).
- If a pupil cannot be located, the police will be informed immediately in line with safeguarding duties.
- Where appropriate, the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

7. Absence in Term-Time

- The school is obliged to follow the law regarding term-time holidays.
- In line with DfE guidance the school will actively discourage term-time holidays.
- When a family takes unauthorised absence, the school will refer to the CAT for a Penalty Notice.
- Headteachers may not grant leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Parents cannot authorise absence. Applications must be submitted in writing at least two weeks in advance.

8. Exceptional Circumstances

The Headteacher will consider requests individually.

Circumstances that may be considered exceptional include:

- Family sickness or bereavement (immediate family)
- Armed forces leave
- Where absence may benefit a child experiencing significant family trauma

Exceptional circumstances do **not** include:

- Financial benefit
- Holidays or travel organisation issues
- Weddings, anniversaries, birthdays

- Fatigue unless supported by a medical certificate
- Sports events
- Family days out
- Jobs or work commitments

The school may request evidence to support applications.

9. Penalty Notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations set the fines at:

- £60 if paid within 21 days
- £120 if paid within 28 days

10. Children Missing Education (CME)

The school follows LA CME procedures and will notify the LA immediately if:

- a child leaves the school without confirmed destination
- a child is absent long-term with no satisfactory reason
- there are safeguarding concerns linked to absence

11. Monitoring and Reporting

In line with DfE 2024 guidance:

- Attendance is analysed weekly
- Pupils with emerging concerns (95–90%) receive early intervention
- Persistent absence (below 90%) triggers targeted support
- Severe absence (below 50%) triggers multi-agency intervention
- Trustees receive termly attendance reports
- Groups such as SEND, Pupil Premium and vulnerable pupils are monitored separately

12. Governor Responsibilities

Trustees must:

- Ensure compliance with attendance law and guidance
- Review whole-school attendance termly
- Challenge leaders where attendance is below expectation
- Approve and review this policy annually

13. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with statutory guidance.

Next Review Date: October 2026 (unless further changes arise)