

ILFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



Spring 2020

Headteacher Signature:	Date: 6 th February 2020
Chair of Governors Signature	Date: 6 th February 2020

ILFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Iford County High School believes that excellent attendance helps students maximise their progress and prepares them well for life in the workplace following their education. ICHS aims to ensure that pupils access their entitlement to education. In support, the Education Welfare Advisory and Support Service Ltd (EWASS) will take steps to improve school attendance and ensure that all welfare needs of school-aged children are addressed. The EWASS works collaboratively with partner and external agencies and services to address any barriers to learning and/or social inclusion and promote school improvement.

The national average for school attendance is 95% and the school expects students to achieve at least 95% attendance across the academic year.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Attendance Policy

- 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am, and will close at 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.25pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents can do this by sending an email to the school or by calling and leaving a message on the school's absence line.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide 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 is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

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.

Should a student need to attend a medical appointment during the school day parents may complete a leave of absence form which can be collected from the school office.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents at each Progress Check Point. There are three Progress Check Points in each academic year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Further details are given in Appendix Two.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal sanctions

Local authorities can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

ICHS works with families to promote good attendance. Excellent attendance is celebrated and students are actively encouraged to improve their attendance and punctuality if it falls below expectations. Further detail can be found in Appendix 4.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are asked to call each morning of their son's absence.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office and reception staff

Office and reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Attendance 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

Attendance Policy

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: The Policy on Leave

The Policy on Leave

"Leave" in relation to a school means leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school.

A Headteacher should only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where s/he is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. Requests should not normally be granted for the purposes of a holiday. Leave of absence will be granted sparingly if there are special considerations and should not normally be granted for more than 3 days per school year for any pupil.

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Considerations

In accordance with Government Guidelines and the Redbridge Attendance Strategy outlined below should be used as a guide to the exercise of a school's discretion. Legally, headteachers cannot forego their discretionary powers.

- School can require evidence, particularly if family are travelling abroad. It is recognised that children and families need time to grieve but it is documented that children with prolonged absences from school find it harder to return and settle.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence up to a suggested maximum of 3 days.
- Teenage parents of compulsory school age will be dealt with outside of this guidance and each case will be dealt with on its merits.
- Time off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, which is subject to a licence being issued by the Local Authority.
- Religious observance subject to a maximum number of 3 days in any academic year. Pilgrimages (for example, Lourdes, Mecca, Rome or Jerusalem) are not religious observance that require absence during school term time.

Specific Circumstances not Included on the List

- Serious illness of a close relative. We feel that such a category would be very difficult to define and invite exploitation. In principle leave should not be granted for the illness of a relative unless a head teacher is convinced that the circumstances are truly exceptional. The EWASS would be happy to discuss individual circumstances
- Prison visits. Most prison visits can be achieved during weekends and holidays, but there may be exceptions when for example a parent is held in a prison a long way from home and when a head believes there is a justification to grant a day's leave.
- Weddings of parents and siblings. Weddings can be arranged at weekends or during holidays and we would not recommend their inclusion on the list of exceptions. If however a head teacher is convinced that there is a persuasive reason as to why a wedding cannot be held out of school time we would recommend 1 day's leave. We would not recommend that leave for weddings abroad should be agreed in term time in view of the potential for such an absence being of considerable duration.

Where a head teacher is exercising discretion, a maximum number of 3 days is recommended. This is subject to the caveat of "avoidable absence", which should only be authorised for exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with statutory instruments – The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – No 1751.

The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admissions register.

Attendance Policy

In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding 10 school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3), that:-

- i) The pupil has failed to attend the school within the 10 school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted.
- ii) The proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause,

And

- iii) Both the proprietor and the Local Authority have failed after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

And

That he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days.

Sanctions for an Unauthorised Leave of Absence without Permission

A Penalty Notice can be considered for unauthorised leave of absence (holiday) taken without permission. It will be issued by the Local Authority following discussions with the Head in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Practice.

If issued, this will incur a fine of £60.00, per parent, per child being imposed, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120.00 per child if paid after 21 days but to be paid by day 28. If payment is not received the Local Authority will consider a referral to a magistrate's court under the original offence following the Education Act 1996.

Prosecutions are brought under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice. Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the penalty notice.

In cases where unauthorised leave of absence has been taken without permission, which exceeds 10 days or more, the school should advise the EWASS immediately in order that steps can be implemented. (The EWASS will have a checklist of requirements before a pupil can be removed from the school roll. Procedures will be used in accordance with statutory instrument 1751.

Absence due to Ill Health

Any absence relating to illness of 5 days or more and where patterns of absence are evident, should be supported by medical evidence. Prescriptions will not be accepted for medication of paracetamol as these can be administered within the school environment.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is defined as:

- When a pupil is absent as a result of illness and an acceptable explanation has been received
- Religious Observance (as defined in the exemptions list)
- where a child has been temporarily excluded from school
- Medical/dental appointments (sight of appointment card should be requested). Appointments should be made outside of school hours wherever possible and the minimum amount of time should be taken.
- Exceptional circumstances (unavoidable absence)

Appendix 3: Punctuality

Punctuality

Persistent lateness does not constitute as full school attendance (Section 444 of Education Act, 1996).

Responsibility of the School

All pupils arriving late, after the close of registration, either with the 'L' or 'U' coding should sign in at school reception in order that times of arrival can be recorded to be used in evidence in the event of court action. This information should be shared with the schools allocated Education Welfare Officer.

EWASS will challenge persistent lateness both before and after the close of registration, schools (after their pre-referral action) should make the necessary referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

An Education Welfare Officer will undertake a late gate inspection at the request of the school.

Sanctions for Persistent Lateness

Legal proceedings can be initiated on behalf of the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, Section 444 (1) and (1a) after all other formal procedures have been exhausted, subject to school unauthorising the lates after the close of registration.

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Consideration for Late Arrivals

- Adverse weather and/or travel conditions
- Delay by a school bus/local authority vehicle
- Pupil on a reduced timetable
- Pregnant pupil with prior agreement with head teacher

Cases of Dual Registration

In cases of dual registration, the Education Welfare Officer of the 'Lead' school will undertake register trawls and monitor attendance. It is the receiving school's responsibility to alert the lead school of non-attendance.

Appendix 4: Guidance and Strategies

Guidance/Strategies

Strategies that have been successfully introduced into school to improve attendance include:

- Attendance audits
- Governor training
- Training on the analysis of data and accurate register recording

The Use of Legal Proceedings

The EWASS will initiate legal proceedings on behalf of the Local Authority against parents where children of compulsory school age are not receiving full time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is The Local Authority that has a legal duty to serve attendance orders on parents and to initiate proceedings against parents of a child who is in breach of a school attendance order or on parents who are failing to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school. The Local Authority must first consider whether or not to apply for an Education Supervision Order with respect to the child (Section 437, 446 and 447 of the Education Act 1996).

Parenting Contracts (Attendance)

A request for a parenting contract can be made for unauthorised absence under Section 19 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

The measures apply to Community, Foundation or Voluntary aided schools, Maintained nursery schools, Colleges and Pupil Referral Units

Parenting Contract Criteria

- Where parents/carers have appeared reluctant to engage with school/EWASS in addressing their child's poor attendance
- Where a parent identifies a need for expert help with parenting issues and is in agreement with targets to be achieved.

Parenting Contracts can be used as evidence of non-compliance in court evidence but initially the parent will enter into this contract voluntarily.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

- Leave of absence taken without permission (holiday)
- Persistent lateness
- Unauthorised leave of absence for 12 sessions or more

Attendance Policy

A Penalty Notice may only be considered in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.

The school, together with the EWASS must consider every aspect of a pupil's wellbeing before considering whether a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. This must include discussions with head teacher, the assigned EWO and any other significant person who have involvement with or knowledge of the pupil/family.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Education Act 1996, Section 444 as amended by Section 82 and 109 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006.
- Section 72 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2000 inserted S.444(1A) into 1996 Act.
- Children Act 1989 S 36(3) Education Supervision Order
- Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 (introduced by Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution.

The Local Authority utilise S.444 Offence: failure to secure regular school attendance of registered pupil