

INGOLDSBY PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

As a team of teachers, support staff, governors and parents we work with love, professionalism and commitment on behalf of and with the pupils of Ingoldsby Primary to provide educational provision of the highest quality. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details of their own child's attendance, in an attendance summary 3 times a year.
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance of 95%.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements.
- Reward good attendance through individual certificates.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- holidays taken in term time because they are cheaper than non- term time
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and absences in term time which have not been agreed.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent feels they need support getting their child to school regularly and on time then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the Parental Support Adviser.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance is below 85% across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

Any PA pupils whose attendance falls below 80%, and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Parent Support Adviser or Education Welfare Officer. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 10:00am.
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 10:00am;

If absences persist we may:

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with class teacher, then Head Teacher
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 85%.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where unauthorised absence exceeds 10 consecutive days or 20% of school sessions in one term. (see Appendix 2)

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect our children to be in the playground *before* this time ready to line up when the bell is rung at **8:55am**. Gates will be closed at 9:10am, any child arriving after that will have to enter school by the front entrance, via the car park and sign the late register.

Registers are marked by **9:10am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the staff to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Illness and medical appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence.

Absence in Term Time granted only under exceptional circumstances

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and we do urge parents not to take any holiday during the school year.

From 1 September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 change the rules about term-time holidays. The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** allowed Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Ingoldsby Primary School will only agree to term-time holiday in EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list some circumstances include:

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark on a tour of duty
- When a company policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year (evidence will be required)
- A one off situation being of unique and emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
- Special family occasions

Parents who wish to make a request for leave must complete a "Leave of Absence form," (Appendix 1) prior to the absence. We strongly recommend that parents gain consent for any absence in term time *before making any arrangements.*

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods: SATS for Year 2 and 6 pupils, Phonics screening for Year 1 pupils.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes a high level of absence.

Children Left uncollected at school

All efforts will be made to contact parents/carer of children left at school using the contact numbers provided In the event of not being able to contact a family member by 4:30pm the following procedures will take place;

- Contact Social Services Placements Officer on 01780 751821 before 5pm so that an emergency placement can be held for the child. School staff must leave a telephone number where they can be contacted.
- The Placements Officer will make arrangements for the child to be placed with local authority carers and advise school staff of their telephone number and address.
- If between alerting the placement officer and delivering the child to the Emergency Placement, the parents can be contacted, every effort must be made by the SLT to ensure the child is returned directly to their care.
- If the parent/carer is incapacitated or refuses to collect the child, the local area officer social worker must be contacted immediately.

This policy should be reviewed by Full Governing Body

Chair of Governors.....

Date.....

Headteacher

Date

(Appendix 1)

INGOLDSBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Application for pupil's leave of absence

Child/Children's name

I apply for leave of absence from school for my child/children for the following period of time.

Date from:..... Date to:.....

Number of school days:.....

Ingoldsby Primary School will only agree to term-time holiday in EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Reason for absence:

.....
.....

Signed
(Parent/Carer)

Date.....

For school use

Child/Children's current level of attendance:.....

Request for absence has been:

Authorised

Unauthorised

Signed
(Headteacher)

Date.....

Appendix 2

Guidance for parents and carers (FIXED PENALTY NOTICES)

School attendance and the law

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives powers to the Local Authority to issue penalty notices where a parent/carers is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

Why has it been introduced?

Increasing school attendance is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's achievement chances, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

What is a penalty notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are unauthorised by school. Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under section

444 of the education act 1996. A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance?

Payment of a penalty notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

What are the costs?

Payment within 28 days of receipt of a notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 42 days. This payment is per parent, per child.

When are they used?

Lincolnshire considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that penalty notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Inappropriate parentally condoned absence
- Excessive Holidays in term time or excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission
- Failure to return to school on the agreed date (may also result in your child losing their school place)
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

In every case (a pupil will have had a minimum of 20 % of school sessions lost to unauthorised absence during the current half term or ten consecutive days of unauthorised absences before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The Authority never takes such action lightly and would far rather work with parents/ carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement actions. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that the authority will use the powers if this is the only way of securing a child's schooling.

Is a warning given?

In most instances, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This will include details of your child's absences and will tell of the period of time during which an improvement is expected. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences from school.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the penalty notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with penalty notices.

What happens if I do not pay?

You have up to 42 days from receipt to pay the penalty notice in full, after which the authority is required under the act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

It is very important that you speak with the school at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about your child's attendance.