Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust
Inspiring all to flourish and succeed

School Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Version 1.0 (February 2024)

Approved by Trustees: 14/02/2024

Date For Review: 14/02/2027

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1. IPAT schools expect full attendance from their pupils in order that they take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them, and aim to support pupils in developing positive attitudes towards punctuality and attendance.

Pupils should be made aware, by both parents and staff, that their presence is important.

1.2. Parents of pupils of compulsory school age are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school; they risk prosecution if they fail in this duty.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for absence.

1.3. Parents should be aware that absence from school may have a detrimental effect on their child's education.

Learning is a complex process in which knowledge, skills and understanding are developed and built on systematically. Interruptions to this process can lead to gaps in a child's knowledge and understanding.

If parents insist on taking their child out of school during term time then they must accept that they bear responsibility for the consequential effects upon their child's education.

The school cannot influence a child's education if the child does not attend school.

1.4. Good attendance is crucial because:

• statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%;

> *"National data also shows that in 2019, primary school children in Key Stage 2* ***who didn't achieve*** *the expected standard in reading, writing and maths* ***missed on average four more days per school year*** *than those whose performance exceeded the expected standard.*

> *National data from 2019 shows that 84% of Key Stage 2 pupils who had 100% attendance achieved the expected standard, compared to 40% of pupils who were persistently absent across the key stage.*"
>
> *Why is school attendance so important and what are the risks of missing a day? (Department for Education, May 2023)*

• regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;

• regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;

• regular attenders find learning more satisfying;

• regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

2.1. A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed, that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. This may include liaison with the Local Authority and other external agencies.

2.1.1. The school attendance leader will convene an attendance review meeting at least once a month with those having delegated responsibilities as set out below.

2.2. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, a member of the attendance team will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

2.2.1 Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents or carers will be invited to attend a meeting at the school to discuss the problem and what support might be offered.

2.3. The school attendance lead may delegate some responsibilities to a family support worker if employed at the school.

Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school, including identifying and addressing any gaps in knowledge or understanding.
- Where there is a prolonged absence, remote support will be planned and offered with the expectation that parents/carers will engage appropriately.

Responsibilities of office staff

- The safeguarding of our children is our primary concern. Therefore the office staff must be able to account for every child on every school day.
- Check registers promptly each morning and afternoon and identify any children who are not accounted for.
- Answer telephone calls and monitor answer phone messages for reports of absences.
- On the first day of absence, contact parents/carers of children who are not accounted for to find out why their child is not at school. If it is not possible to speak to a parent or carer the IPAT Missing Child Policy should be followed.
- Accept delegated responsibility for attendance tracking if agreed with the attendance lead.

Responsibilities of pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Be ready for the day's learning.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

2.4. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 lays a duty on parents to ensure that their child receives an efficient, full-time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs that they may have. Parents may be prosecuted if they fail to ensure their child receives an education.

2.5. Parents/carers should:

• Ensure that children arrive at school on time. Children who arrive in school after registration begins must go directly to the school office where their arrival time and reason for lateness is recorded. They are then marked as late in the register. Arrivals after 9.30am. will be considered as absences and require authorisation.
• Inform the school on the first day of absence by telephone or electronic message and contact the school again on all subsequent days of absence. The school should be contacted no later than 9.30am on ALL days of absence. Failure to do so may result in the school enacting the provisions contained within the Missing Child policy.
• Discuss with the office team any planned absences well in advance.
• Fully support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
• Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for.
• Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
• Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Responsibilities of The Trust and Local Governing Bodies

2.6. The Trust Executive Team and Local Governing Bodies will offer support to the school attendance lead in enacting this policy, as well as providing oversight of attendance trends.

3. ABSENCE

3.1. There are two types of absence:

3.1.1. **Authorised** (where the school approves pupil absence), which might include:

• pupil sickness
• serious or critical illness of a close relative
• unavoidable medical/dental appointments (you will be asked to show an appointment letter by the office team in such circumstances)
• exceptional short term domestic circumstances
• religious observance
• bereavement of a close relative
• wedding of immediate family member
• attending an embassy to arrange a visa or renew a passport where this cannot be arranged out of term time
• attendance at or in connection with a Children's Hearing or Care Review
• approved activities for sports and the arts
• 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.

3.1.2. **Unauthorised** (where the school will not approve absence)
Absence will not be authorised for events such as:
• shopping trips
• birthday or other day trips
• non-medical appointments
• closure of a sibling's school for training days
• family holidays
• Traveller pupils travelling for non-occupational purposes

An absence will automatically be recorded as unauthorised if there is no telephone/written explanation received from parents.

4. FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

4.1. Parents should not book a family holiday during term time. A pupil's absence in term time can seriously disrupt the continuity of their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days that they are away, but they are also less well prepared for the lessons building on this when they return. Absence can also disrupt their friendships.

4.2. From 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education Regulations in relation to absence from school give NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave (for example following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events).

4.3. Parents must notify the headteacher in writing if they wish to apply for exceptional leave of absence from school for any reason using the appropriate form. Each request will be considered individually. Exceptional leave requests should be made prior to making any further arrangements that commit a child to the absence.

4.4. The following will not be deemed as exceptional circumstances:
- the availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation
- holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term
- holidays booked by a third party

4.5. The school reserves the right to withdraw authorisation should a child's attendance deteriorate between the leave of absence application and the time when the absence is due to occur.

4.6. The school recognises that parents' circumstances (financial position, working commitments etc) vary enormously but the headteacher is nonetheless required to ensure that pupils only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable.

4.7. If a child is taken out of school for a holiday in term time and an application for leave of absence for the holiday has been refused by the school this absence will be unauthorised and the local authority may issue a Penalty Notice in the sum of £60 per parent/carer per child.

5. LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE / ATTENDANCE GIVING CAUSE FOR CONCERN

5.1. Whilst encouraging 100% attendance if possible, we recognise that there are circumstances in which attendance may not be possible.

It is our expectation that all pupils will achieve attendance of 96% and above. Attendance is monitored closely. Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance falls to 93% as the

child may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.

5.2. Parents of pupils with attendance below 90%, which is considered to be persistent absenteeism, and with a high level of unauthorised absence, are at risk of fixed penalty notices.

5.3. Where there is no significant improvement in attendance the parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the situation. This will lead to an agreed attendance support contract between home and school to avoid any future unnecessary absences.

Appendix A: School Register - Attendance Codes

Present at school:
Registration Code **/ **: Present in school **/** = am **** = pm
Present in school during registration
L Late arrival before the register has closed

Authorised:

B Off-site educational activity
C Leave of absence authorised by the school
D Dual registered – at another educational establishment
E Excluded
H Holiday authorised by the school
I Illness (not medical/dental appointments)
J At an interview with prospective employers/or at another educational establishment
M Medical or dental appointment
P Participating in a supervised sporting activity
R Religious observance
S Study leave
T Traveller absence
V Educational visit or trip
W Work experience

Unauthorised:
G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher
N No reason yet provided for absence
O Absent from school without authorisation
U Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes:
X Not required to be in school
Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z Pupil not on the admission register
Planned whole or partial school closure

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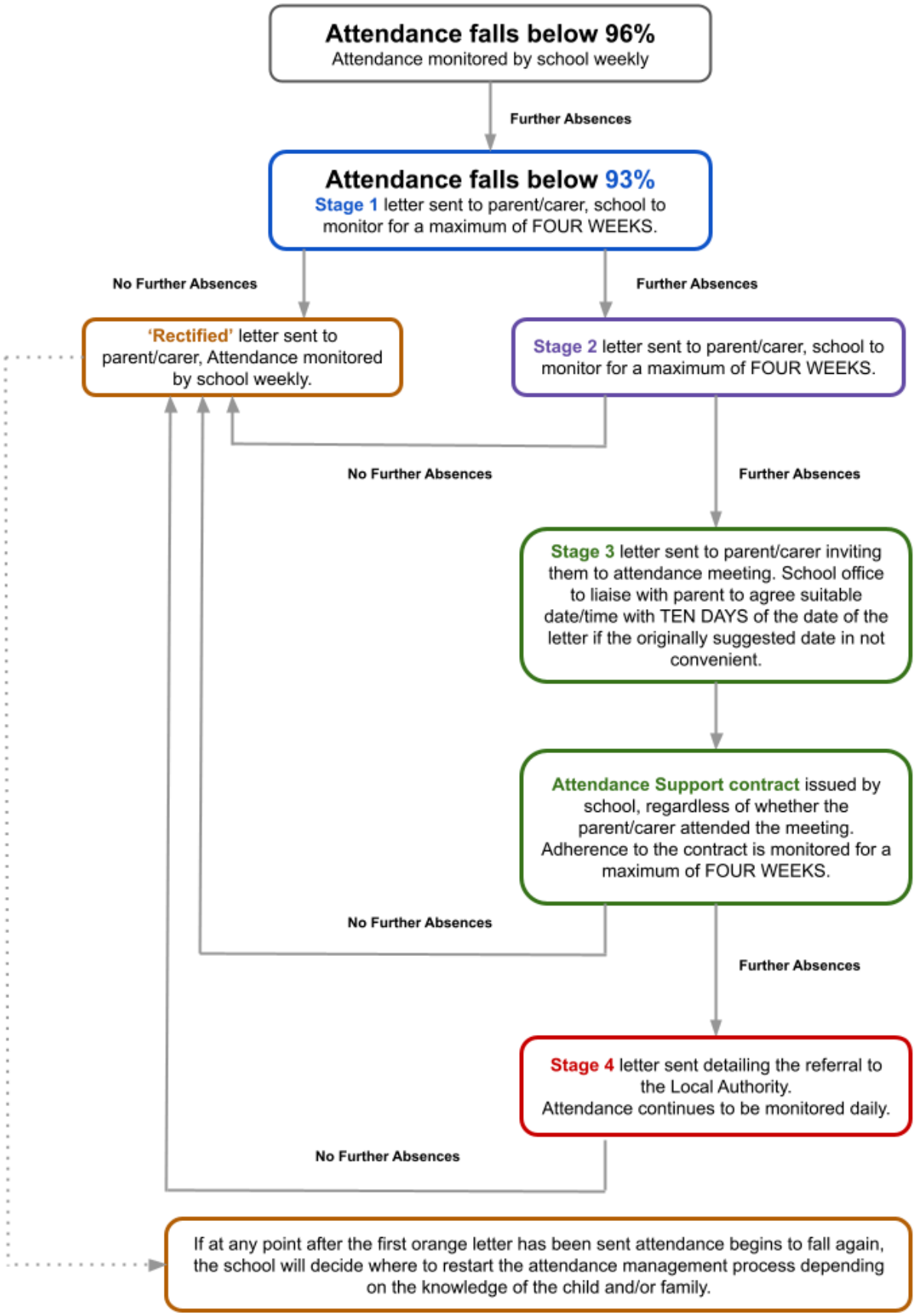
Pupil Leave of Absence Application Form

Please note, leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If not agreed, the period will be marked as 'unauthorised absence' and recorded on your child's school record accordingly.

Please complete and return to the school office.

Child's Name:
Class:
Date of requested absence: From: To: Total School Days:
Please indicate why this leave of absence cannot take place in the course of the normal school holiday pattern. (Attach a copy of any appointment letter or documentation to support this)
Signed by the person with legal responsibility for the young person: Date:
For office use only: Absence code: Agreed by:

Appendix B: Attendance Management Flowchart