



# **INSPIRING FUTURES PARTNERSHIP TRUST**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Policy Type	Statutory
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## **Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust**

### **Attendance Policy**

1. Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust believe that regular attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

#### **2. Legal Framework**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of sixteen.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### 3. **Categorising Absence**

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the individual Academy and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the pupil's Academy by telephone or text on the first day of absence and provide the Academy with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness – In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the Academy that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointment – Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend the Academy for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to the academy.

Other Authorised Circumstances – Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust does not have an exhaustive list of circumstances that are considered authorised. All exceptional circumstances for authorised absences must be discussed in person and in advance (or as soon as possible) with the Principal. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Excluded (no alternative provision made) – Exclusion from attending the Academy is counted as authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Late Arrival – Registration begins at 8.50 am for KS2 and 8.55 am for FS and KS1. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present, but, having arrived late. The register will close at 9.30 am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as absent. This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the Academy Office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are at the Academy.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. (Code M)

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late after the registers close without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry. (Code U)

Unauthorised absence:- Absences will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the Academy.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Having a hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other purpose)
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend the academy
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the academy

Leave of Absence and Extended leave:- Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from the Academy during term time for the purpose of a holiday and are strongly advised not to do so. Parents should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

Parents wishing to take their child out of the Academy during term time must send a written request to the Principal before arrangements are made. Documentary evidence of leave and return dates may be required in order to process your request. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore, will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the Academy may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance:- Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside the Trust holiday periods or weekends and that this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave or religious observance. (Code R)

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend the Academy on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parents' religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the Academy if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the Trust and limiting the authorised absence rate of the individual Academy, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three

days in total in any academic year. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence: The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend the Academy as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. Traveller absence (Code T) is acceptable only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending the Academy as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at the Academy.

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a Traveller family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

An Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust academy will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at an Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust academy will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust academies can operate effectively as the child's base school only if we are engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school

- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as for any other pupil.

#### **4. Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will be deleted from the register only when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The Trust is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- When a parent informs the academy in writing that the pupil is to be withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the academy and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the academy before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence have elapsed and both the Local Authority and the academy have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil has left the academy but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the academy and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust will follow Buckinghamshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust believe that improved attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the Academy staff, trustees, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

All Staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole academy approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of academy strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about the Academy and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular Academy attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the Academy if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of Academy hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the Academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the Academy; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with the academy and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both the academy and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before

- Not keep their child away from the Academy to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Principal in advance of booking the holiday.

## **6. Using Attendance Data**

All pupils' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every week the Attendance Administrator and Learning Mentor will review all attendance data. A five week review is made on a rolling programme for each pupil within the academy with attendance under 96%.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger Academy action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole academy strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **7. Support Systems**

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in the academy. Parents should make the Academy aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in at the academy for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the Academy identify any additional support that may be required.

Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The Trust will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors

- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

## **8. Legal Sanctions**

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust, or the individual academy concerned, will notify the Buckinghamshire Education Welfare Service of the irregular attendance.

The Education Welfare Service or the Academy, may invite parents to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, the academy and the parent. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- Intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupil has taken leave of absence i.e. for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the academy.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine, per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/.carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The Trust will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

### Rewards

We celebrate attendance at Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust academies on a weekly basis in assembly, both at KS1 and KS2, where the class or classes with the highest percentage receives a reward.

At the end of the Academy school year, certificates are given to the children with 100% attendance and those with attendance of 98% and above.

Attendance percentages for each child are given out at parents' evenings and are also reported at the end of the year to the parents as part of the Academy report. These figures are sent to their secondary school.

### **Confidentiality Notice**

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## Intervention Flow Chart

The Trust or individual Academy will notify parent of the child's irregular school attendance and offer them the opportunity and support to improve.

If you receive a letter informing you of concerns regarding your child's attendance you should:

- Speak with your child to see if there are any reasons why they are reluctant to attend
- Contact the Academy to discuss any difficulties you or your child may be experiencing
- Ensure your child attends school regularly

If there is no improvement and the parent has not provided a good reason for the absence, the Trust of the individual Academy may refer to the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service will invite you to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and may issue a Warning of a Penalty Notice.

A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between you and the Local Authority aimed at supporting you in improving your child's Academy attendance.

Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract is voluntary, if you fail to engage with the support offered and your child's attendance remains irregular, the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice or begin legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

If you are issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 per parent/carer, per child this must be paid in full within 21 days otherwise the Penalty will increase to £120 per parent/carer, per child. If you fail to pay the Penalty by the 28<sup>th</sup> day, the Education Welfare Service may instigate legal proceedings against you.

If you are found guilty of this offence you can be fined up to £2500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months.