IRONSTONE ACADEMY TRUST

IAT

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

(PUPILS)

POLICY APPLIES TO:	ALL TRUST SCHOOLS
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The Trustees have directed that the schools within our Trust follow this Policy.

Introduction

Ironstone Academy Trust recognises that high levels of school attendance are significant to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. It is an assumption so widely understood but insufficiently stated that children and young people need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind and achieving less in both primary and secondary school.

The policy is relevant to every child on roll between the ages of 2 and 11 years. The Policy is used with discretion to inform discussions where pupils attend a 2-Year-old Provision. The monitoring of attendance for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (FS1) follows this process but without recourse to formal or legal proceedings. The monitoring of attendance for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (FS2) follows this process, including the formal attendance process but without recourse to legal intervention where the child is not of school age. Where an older pupil attends a school, the Policy applies equally to them.

The Trust facilitates the attendance monitoring and intervention where a child's school attendance is falling below national expectations. A robust monitoring process ensures a parent is aware of their child's attendance at the earliest opportunity with intervention at the appropriate threshold within a continuum of need.

As with all aspects of a child's life, it is the parents who have the pivotal role in ensuring their child's best interests are taken into consideration at all times. The law in relation to the regular attendance of a child at school is strict in the application of this responsibility. We want to support our parents in carrying out this responsibility but at the same time we will tender challenges where a child's level of attendance falls behind expectations. To this end, the policy is robust in its early identification of attendance concerns and structured to ensure the appropriate level of support is put in place.

Safeguarding and pupil absence from school

Absence from school is a safeguarding factor and this will be the foremost concern for the school and the Trust when dealing with pupil absence. It is therefore important that parents notify NORMANBY PRIMARY SCHOOL of reason for absence on each day of absence and that absences are kept to a minimum to avoid any unnecessary home visits or referrals to external agencies.

Ironstone Academy Trust recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff who during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with the pupils and their families, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupil. This includes effective joint working practice with external agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise and ensuring attendance practice and record keeping reflects this responsibility.

Absence from school is monitored to identify pupils who may be vulnerable for welfare reasons or identified as not making progress in their learning.

Ironstone Academy Trust recognises that a child's learning journey starts at the very beginning of their Early Years education, this being an important time for parents to embed good habits of attendance with their child, which will follow them through their school life. The parent is expected to have good routines in place to ensure their child is prepared for school each day and is ready to learn by attending regularly and being in school on time. Once established, we believe the child will easily become accustomed to all school routines and will grow through their education to become an independent learner. If there are any issues the child's class teacher must be alerted immediately.

At times difficulties may arise within a family, which can impact upon a child's learning and school attendance. In such cases, it is important for a pupil or parent to speak to a person within school, who in confidence, will listen and discuss the best way forward. Ironstone Academy Trust believe in working closely with the pupils and parents to develop relationships to ensure a child's education is not interrupted and they can continue to attend school regularly. However, by the same token, the frequent absence of a child from school will not be tolerated and the necessary enquires will be made with a parent.

Context of the school attendance measures

A parent is responsible for ensuring their child being of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. This is a legal requirement.

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August, they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, they are of compulsory school age on 31st December

A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

The legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, academies, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents, are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996, sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5)
- 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

School Day

The timings for the school day are as published on the school website.

Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day.

Afternoon registration will take place immediately after lunch.

If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes. In such cases, to ensure effective safeguarding practice is in place, it is important that the pupil's details are recorded in school as being signed out by a member of staff. In the case of a primary school aged child a signature from the appropriate adult collecting the child is also required. Accordingly, where the pupil returns to the school, they should be signed back in. Reasons for signing a child out of school, in every case must be confirmed by the parent. Evidence will be requested to support the reason.

Attendance and Absence Codes

A list of all the codes and their meanings are contained in the *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*.

The codes enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps the school, local authority and Ofsted to gain a greater understanding of the level and the reasons for pupil absence. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of reason for absence on each day of absence, to enable the appropriate registration code to be applied.

Attendance Registers

The law requires all schools to have an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the register.

At Ironstone Academy Trust, the attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion a record is made as to whether a pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- The school will follow up any absences to:
- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the electronic register which is used to download data to the School Census.

All attendance information is kept in accordance with confidentiality and data protection practice. The main attendance register is compiled electronically using the Management Information System (MIS) SIMS.

Lateness

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code U: Late arrival after the register has closed.

(Registers close 30 minutes from the start of the school day. For statistical reasons, arrival to school after this time is recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be subject to formal attendance processes. Afternoon registration closes after the register is taken).

Regular school attendance is determined between the hours prescribed by the school. As part of a parent's responsibility to ensuring their child attends regularly at school, it is important for parents to ensure their child is arriving on time to school.

Ironstone Academy Trust will not tolerate a child being late to school and reasons will be contested. The staffs strive hard to ensure each pupil within their care is taught to good and outstanding national curriculum requirements. This cannot be achieved where a child is late to school and is not ready to learn.

It is important that a child arrives to school on time.

Once the school entrance is closed, the pupil will be required to sign in at the school office, where the reason for lateness will be recorded. In the case of a primary school aged child, the expectation is for the parent (or person bringing the child to school) to accompany the child into the school office, to record the reason for lateness.

Lateness to school can be a very upsetting and isolating experience for a child and parents are encouraged to ensure that their child is on time at school every day. This is important for the child as:

Before the beginning of the school day, it is important for a child to have contact with their peers on the playground. This is one of the times during the school day where they can share quality time with their peers and are able to forge their friendships. Children who are late to school miss this opportunity and can quickly become anxious and withdrawn, lacking in self-esteem and feeling left out.

Children who are late to school readily become identified amongst their peer group as a person who is unprepared for school and who disrupts the learning of others. This can leave the child feeling confused and unsettled, having to play catch up with their work without having had the appropriate instruction from the tutor. In turn, this may lead to the child becoming unhappy and disaffected with their learning and not wanting to come to school.

Where a child is late to school, they may miss out on vital information important to their learning or participation in other school activities, such as school trips.

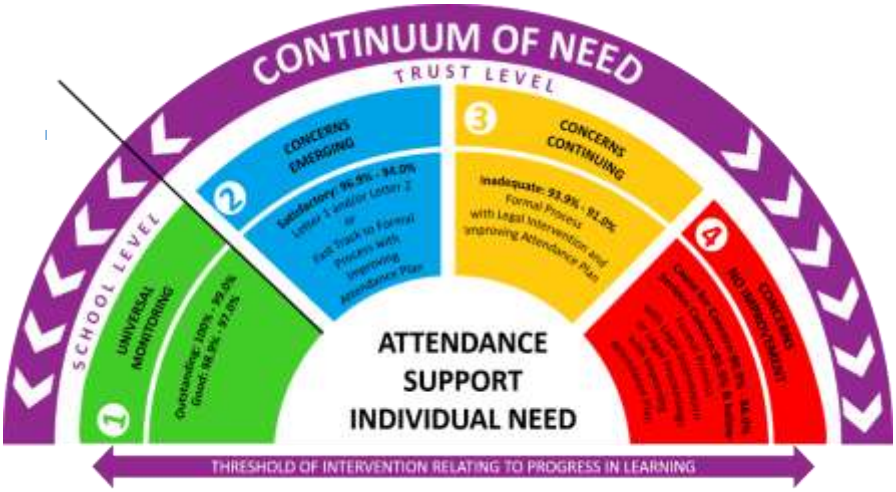
Lateness to school is a safeguarding factor which is monitored to identify pupils who may be vulnerable for welfare reasons or identified as not making progress in their learning. The minutes late are accumulated on each occasion a child is arriving late to school. Where lateness is persistent, the Trust may notify a parent in writing of the amount of time which their child has missed from their learning, by arriving late to school. Following receipt of a letter, the expectation is for lateness to school to improve.

Monitoring Attendance

The Trust monitors school attendance when attendance falls below national expectations and facilitates the attendance monitoring process in collaboration with the School Attendance Lead.

The expectation is for pupils to attend school every day, otherwise attaining at least 97% attendance for the school year, which equates to having 5 days (or 10 sessions) absence.

The model of attendance practice supports a continuum of need applying a step up/step down process. It consists of a four-tiered approach, which is applied consistently across the stages, to ensure the individual needs of a child are being met.



A robust attendance process is applied within the tiered approach that matches the level of a child's attendance to their expected progress in learning. This will determine the level of intervention necessary. The monitoring of attendance for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (FS1) follows this process but without recourse to formal or legal proceedings. The monitoring of attendance for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (FS2) follows this process, including the formal attendance process but without recourse to legal intervention where the child is not of school age.

The Trust will notify a parent in writing, as early as possible, where their child's attendance has fallen below expectations. To comply with legal requirements, each parent is notified in writing separately.

At stage 2, where there are continuing concerns and decline in attendance, the second attendance letter highlights the need for the parent to provide proof of illness/medical absence to be provided to enable the authenticity of an absence to be satisfied. In such cases, a prescription notice, medical letter, appointment card, or similar, will suffice. The school does not require the parent to provide a GP sick note, and do not expect the parent to make an additional payment, subject to prescription charges, to satisfy this requirement.

The attendance process is subject to fast tracking and where appropriate, the Trust will initiate measures without recourse to the staged approach. This is generally applied where unauthorised absence has been determined, is frequent and further delay will be detrimental to the welfare and educational progress of the pupil.

Formal Attendance Process/Legal Intervention/Legal Proceedings

The Trust initiates the formal attendance process, where there is a continued decline in attendance (stage 3). In such cases, the Trust will invite the parent to an Attendance Case Conference, to be held at the school, the purpose of which is to formulate a plan to work together to improve attendance. A legal intervention will be considered. A review conference will be held within 4 to 6 weeks. In some cases, the Home-School Liaison Officer may be assigned to support a parent and child to improve attendance.

As a child's regular attendance at school is a legal requirement, subject to section 444 of the Education Act 1996, legal intervention may be deemed to be necessary (stage 4). This requires a referral to the local authority who has the delegated authority to arrange either the issue of a summons or penalty notice to the parent of a child who is not attending school regularly, where there is evidence to support the commission of the offence.

The Trust will initially consider using the Penalty Notice Regulations when considering a legal intervention. This must be preceded by a Notice to Improve letter, requiring the parent to ensure the child attends school for a specified number of school days, as stipulated in the letter, otherwise the parent may be issued with a penalty notice. By adopting this measure, it is hoped that good habits of attendance will be encouraged, and further intervention is not required. Where the Notice to Improve period has been achieved, it is important that improvements to attendance are sustained, otherwise a fine may still be issued.

The issuing of a penalty notice is undertaken by the local authority acting on the recommendation of the Trust and subject to evidential requirements being satisfied.

Where the matter is referred for legal proceedings, the Trust may be minded to require the Magistrates to consider imposing a Parenting Order. This is not a punitive requirement but is aimed at supporting the parent in giving effect to their parenting responsibilities to enable school attendance to improve.

Persistent Absence

A pupil who has 10% or more absence is classified as being a 'persistent absentee'. This is measured in sessions missed from school and could be owing to either authorised or unauthorised absence. These are pupils that are particularly vulnerable to missing education or not making efficient progress in their learning. In most cases pupils with this level of absence will be subject to an Improved Attendance Plan, to ensure they are supported to improve their school attendance. In collaboration with the School Attendance Lead, the Trust may write to a parent whose child is a persistent absent pupil.

Unauthorised Absence

The school has a responsibility to follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence. Unauthorised absence is recorded where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Parents/carers are expected to notify the school of their child's absence on the first day of the absence and every day thereafter. All unexplained and unexpected absences will be followed up in a timely manner on the same day of absence. Every effort will be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the school will amend the register if satisfied as to the authenticity of the absence. If this is not satisfied, the school may require further evidence to support the absence. In accordance with safeguarding practice, where a child has been absent for 3 days, the Trust will be informed, and a home visit will be made. It is therefore important that absences are managed effectively, and a child is returned to school as soon as possible

Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Parents/carers are advised to notify the school as soon as possible when a child is to be absent for illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt or illness absence is frequent, the Trust may require a parent to provide medical evidence to support illness absence. In such cases, a prescription notice, medical letter, appointment card, or similar, will suffice. The parent is not expected to request medical certificates from the GP, or any other information, which can incur a charge.

Ironstone Academy Trust will ensure that pupils at school with medical conditions are supported to enable them to have full access to their education. In such cases an individual medical care plan may be initiated, in consultation with the parent and pupil and relevant healthcare professional. The plan will consider the management of absence from school.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Parents are therefore encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, a child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment, returning to school immediately after the appointment.

It is important to ensure effective safeguarding practice is in place. A pupil arriving at school after being at a medical appointment, who has not been marked present for that session, must be signed into the school at the office. Evidence of the medical appointment will need to be produce, otherwise a child arriving into school will be recorded as late, which may be an unauthorised lateness, depending on the time of arrival into school.

Ironstone Academy Trust seeks to work flexibly with parents in managing medical absence, so as not to penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition, e.g. hospital appointments. Where evidence is produced or the school are satisfied to the authenticity of the absence, on returning to school the child will be recorded as late for that session. In such cases, the minutes late will not be recorded.

Administration of Medicines in School

Ironstone Academy Trust policy indicates that the school will support children in continuing their education when they are well enough to do so in a range of ways, including in certain circumstances, through the administration of medicine.

Children Missing from Education

A pupil who is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days is regarded as a 'child missing from education'. In such cases, a referral will be made to the Trust and the local authority. All necessary enquiries to trace the pupil, through any additional contact numbers or home visits will be made. This is regarded as a major safeguarding concern and may involve contact being made with the Police or the local authority children's services. It is important for a parent to notify the school on each day of absence each day of absence and ensure a change to contact information is updated. This will avoid unnecessary enquiries or referral being made to the police or the local authority children's services.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The Leave of absence in Term Time policy is managed by the Trust.

The parent who has responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school, must make application to the Head Teacher of the school at which their child is on roll, for any leave of absence in term time. Using the appropriate application form, the request should be made providing at least one month's notice. A separate application is required to be completed for each child. Leave of absence in term time is not a parental right.

The application form and the Leave of Absence in Term Time policy is downloadable from the school website/ available upon request from the school office.

Head Teachers will not grant leave of absence in term time. However, there may be exceptional circumstances, for granting leave of absence in term time, which will be determined as:

a recent serious illness/bereavement of an immediate family member;

a member of the Armed Forces whereby they need to undertake a tour of duty which conflicts with school holidays;

restrictions on police leave, where a police officer has specific duties in relation to a national event which conflicts with school holidays.

Each parent will be informed in writing whether the leave has been agreed or not, within 15 school days of the application being received.

Where the decision is made not to grant leave of absence in term time and the leave is taken without prior approval, or without application, a referral will be made to the local authority if a child is absent from school for 10 sessions over a 10-week period. Parents will be informed in writing of the decision to refer the matter to the local authority.

Where this is the case, the matter will be referred to the local authority for consideration of the issue of a penalty notice. The local authority has a Penalty Notice Code of Practice that will determine whether a fine is issued. The Trust will have regard to the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct in making the recommendation for the issue of penalty notices. A penalty notice may be issued to each parent in respect of each child who has been absent.

The Local Authority may consider taking further action when unauthorised leave of absence is taken at the following critical times and circumstances, if deemed to be in the public interest.

- Where there are 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.
- At any time during formal external examination and assessment periods, including preparation time (school to provide evidence to support).

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 per parent, per child when paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Third Offence, and any further offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

To enhance safeguarding practice, the Trust requires an application for any leave of absence in term time to be completed (with the exception of medical or illness absences). This includes where a child is participating in a sporting activity, performance, or where the absence is for religious observance. In such cases, the Trust will undertake enquiries as to the safeguarding arrangements of any external provider, before agreeing to the absence. Evidence will be requested to support an application.

A consistent approach is used in determining exceptional circumstances or considering absences for other reasons. By adopting a universal approach, fairness and proportionality is assured in application of the policy.

To ensure the school is able to safely manage the risk of transmission of coronavirus, it is important that when requesting a leave of absence that information on the destination to be visited is included on the request form.

Travelling Children

Where a child is to be absent from school to travel in the course of a parent's business, a traveller postcard is required to be completed by the parent, giving details of the duration of the period of absence and the expected date of return. With this information, for short periods of absence, the Trust will consider authorising the absence. Where this information is not provided and the period of absence is in excess of 20 school days, the school will remove a child from roll. It is therefore important that this procedure is followed.

Whilst travelling, ideally a child should be registered at another school. This will ensure that a child's learning is not interrupted. In such cases, the child will remain on the school roll as a dual registered pupil. If required, the Trust can help the parent to identify a school in another area.

Alternative Provision

The school is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, the school must have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider, to provide attendance information. Where possible, this will be provided daily, at the least weekly. All unexplained and unexpected absences are to be followed up in a timely manner. The school and the Trust will make challenges to an external provider that is not providing attendance information or following up absences.

Pupils may be present at an off-site activity which has been approved by the school. The appropriate registration code (B) is used in such cases and in using this code the school is certifying the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard children. This code will not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing schoolwork.

A pupil may be dual registered at more than one school. Where this is the case, the appropriate code (D) is used to indicate the pupil was not expected to attend the session as they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school.

Rewarding Attendance

Each school and college has incentives for encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. These include raising points for achieving good attendance which collectively contribute to House/Group attendance cups. It is important that all pupils are given the opportunity to contribute to this success by attending school regularly.

Every Day Counts

As few as 19 missed days (or 38 sessions) over the school year reduces a child's chances of success. Their SAT or GCSE results could drop by one grade across all subjects.

Education is important to all children regardless of ability. It builds a child's resilience and offers a safe and nurturing environment in which a child can learn lots of exciting new skills and knowledge every day, as well as learning to work with others and forging friendships which will support them through their childhood, with some friendships lasting well into adulthood.

Being organised the night before with appropriate bedtimes and ensuring a child has at least 9 hours downtime (including from the use of electronic games or gadgets before bed), is an important and common-sense approach to ensuring a child attends school and is ready to learn. Once established, this is a habit which will follow them through life.

Attendance in the latter years of a child's education can significantly impact on their opportunities when leaving

school, with further education providers and prospective employers requiring references, for which the school is legally bound to provide an honest and accurate account.

Any questions about this policy or further information and advice on school attendance matters or parenting support can be obtained from the school.

Ironstone Academy Trust
Carl Faulkner Chief Executive Officer cfaulkner@normanby.org.uk

Our School Day

The school doors are opened to children and parents at 8.40am .

Children and parents wait in the playgrounds until members of staff open the doors.

Parents and carers are encouraged to use our drop in sessions if they wish to discuss areas of concern with staff.

These are shared via our weekly newsletters.

There is no formal supervision from staff until the doors are opened.

School equipment, including climbing walls, wooden activity trails or other movable items must not be used without staff supervision. It should not be used by children under the supervision of their parents or carers.

Registration is from 8.45 am to 9.00am , after which official teaching time begins. Arrivals after 9.15am are recorded as late.

Break times will normally be in the playgrounds, weather permitting, and on the field in warm, dry weather.

Nursery (Foundation Stage 1)
Morning Session
8.40am to 11.40am
Afternoon Session
12.15pm to 3.15pm

Reception (Foundation Stage 2), Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6
Morning Session
9.45am to 12.00pm
Afternoon Session
1.00pm to 3.15pm