



Icklesham Church of England Primary School and Nursery



Let Your Light Shine

Headteacher: Paula Robinson B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

Our Vision

We are a school built on Christian foundations where every individual is celebrated as unique. We aspire to be curious, compassionate, tolerant and active in a diverse world. We gather together to build a community that finds each person's gifts and nurtures them that their light may shine. We hold a vision of success for all.

Let Your Light Shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven. Matthew 5:16

Attendance Policy

Policy to be approved by	Full Governing Body
Policy review schedule	Annual
Policy last reviewed	June 2023
Policy ratified and adopted by the Full Governing Body	27 th June 2023
Policy due for review	June 2024

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please note our attendance policy is based on the ESCC model.

This policy reflects the vision, values and aims of Icklesham Church of England Primary School and Nursery by:

- encouraging staff, parents/ carers and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential;
- providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Aims

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum, Daily attendance ensures that all children can take full advantage of both the learning and social aspects on offer each day at school. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. Children tell us that when they are regularly absent from school it affects their friendships as well as their learning.

As regular attendance is such an important factor in successful learning and social development, we have committed funds to support families in achieving this. We have an attendance team including Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Maskell, as well as an Attendance Welfare Officer, Mrs. Hackett, who joins us from LW Consultancy Ltd Attendance Welfare Services. Mrs Hackett will write to parents/ carers and invite families in to school where attendance concerns are raised. A 'good' level of attendance is defined by the school as 97% or above. Where attendance falls below this, initial concerns are raised. This is because absence can quickly impact on children's academic and social development.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/ carer. Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/ carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Attendance meetings are held to discuss reasons for absence and to help support families with any difficulties or barriers to attendance that they may be facing.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents/ carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or email to the office. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents/ carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- truancy before or during the school day

Parents/ Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the family to the Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer the family to the Education Support,

Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Attendance Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents/ carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Office staff should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multiagency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

Implementation

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Parents/ Carers are asked to follow this procedure for informing the school of a child's absence:

- inform the school by **9.30 a.m.** on each day of the absence;
- if the school has not been notified of an absence by 9.30 a.m. we will attempt to contact the child's home by telephone to ascertain if the child was sent to school and where no contact is made, or there is a concern, a visit may be made to the registered home address.

It is not considered to be an offence if the parent/ carer can demonstrate that his/her child's absence was attributable to one of the following:

- the pupil was absent with leave i.e. by authorisation obtained from the Governing Board or Headteacher;
- the pupil was ill;
- the pupil could not attend through unavoidable cause;
- religious observance;
- arrangements, for a pupil entitled to Local Education Authority support with travel, fail;
- attending a medical or dental appointment.

If a parent/ carer accurately reports their child's absence for one of these reasons, the absence will be recorded as being authorised. Within the context of the law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. It is necessary therefore for the school to be accurately informed about each absence. Where

an absence is unexplained or does not fall within the category of being authorised, the absence is deemed to be unauthorised.

Parents/ Carers are asked not to condone unjustified absence such as the following:

- a birthday treat;
- to visit relations;
- to enable the parent to take a 'long weekend';
- accompanying a parent/ carer on a shopping trip;
- to take a 'long weekend'

In such instances, and others, this will be regarded as an unauthorised absence on the grounds that it was not an acceptable reason for pupil absence. Parent/ Carer co-operation in this respect can help to ensure that the child builds a respect for being at school.

The Headteacher has discretion to authorise an appropriate number of day's absence in such matters as:

- bereavement, family wedding;
- attendance for examination;
- education at a different location.

In these and other instances, parents/ carers are asked to write in advance giving details for the reason and day(s) the child is expected to be absent.

Lateness

Like absence from school, lateness is seen as being a disruption to a child's continuity of learning. Lateness, except when exceptionally unavoidable, can lead to poor timekeeping, present a disorganised beginning to the day, and cause unnecessary interruption for others. If a child is late for school it is vital that their presence is recorded. If the class register has been forwarded to the office then it will be necessary to report their arrival to be marked present. All lateness is recorded. Where this becomes a regular occurrence, parents/ carers are contacted and the reasons for lateness are requested.

Registers close at 9.00am. Where a child is more than 30 minutes late for the start of the morning/afternoon session, with satisfactory explanation, the child will be marked present. If there is not a satisfactory explanation an unauthorised absence will be recorded against his/her name.

Children who leave school before the end of the school day

If a parent/ carer collects their child before the end of the school day e.g. a child who is unwell being collected to attend a medical appointment, then the parent is asked to inform the Office staff who will record in the appropriate book the child's name, time of departure and reason for leaving. A record of the child's absence will be made in the class register. This procedure is essential to maintain an accurate record of the numbers of pupils on site. The absence is recorded as being authorised unless it does not comply with the reasons given for such an absence.

Family holidays

Parents/ Carers organising a family holiday are requested to make arrangements in the school holidays, dates of which are sent out well in advance or on the school or East Sussex website. If

parents/carers can only organise a family holiday during term time then it is expected that an application form will be completed (these are available from the Office), well in advance, to seek the Headteacher's decision.

The Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981 give the school discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. This applies in exceptional circumstances only.

Family holidays will not be authorised in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Each case will be considered separately, and a decision made by the Headteacher and supported by the Governing Board. Absence with this agreement is therefore recorded as authorised, whilst absence without this agreement, or in excess of the agreed period, is recorded as unauthorised.

In the case of an unauthorised holiday of 10 sessions (5 school days) or more the Attendance Welfare Officer and the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine which increases if not paid within the first 28 days. Thereafter, the penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action.

Excluded pupils

In the event of a pupil being excluded from school, the pupil's absence will be recorded as authorised. Should a permanent exclusion be confirmed, the pupil will be removed from the school roll. It should be explained that this school does not consider irregular attendance or persistent lateness as reasonable grounds for exclusions from school.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and initiatives:

- We have set an attendance target of 97% or above (97+) for all pupils (allowing for unavoidable authorised illness absence);
- The importance of daily attendance and punctuality is a feature of every Friday Celebration Assembly, where children are reminded and celebrated for attending every day that week
- Class teachers regularly discuss the importance of daily attendance with their classes and meet with children who have missed school to support them to catch up and to avoid further absence
- We recognise that the responsibility for a child's daily attendance is mostly with the parent/ carer and so we do not use rewards with children for good attendance, rather we encourage daily attendance and ensure the whole family recognise the value in attending every day
- Attendance is monitored both within each academic year and for the previous 12 months from the point of concern. This helps us understand the nature of the concern more fully over time.
- Parents/ carers whose child's attendance falls below 97%+ will receive an initial concern letter and this will be routinely monitored
- Parents/ carers whose child's attendance is at risk of falling below 90%, or has fallen below 90%, will receive an attendance concern letter and a request to meet with the School

Attendance Team to improve their child's attendance. In this case attendance is then monitored each month until attendance returns to 97% or above.

- If attendance does not improve then the Attendance Welfare Officer will report the parents/ carers to the Education Support Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) and a fine could be issued (see Attendance Appendix)
- Attendance of all classes and all vulnerable groups are analysed monthly and parents/carers contacted by the School Attendance Team as soon as concerns are raised.

School Attendance Team

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Paula Robinson – Headteacher

Louise Maskell - SENCO

Joanna Barry – School Secretary

Karen Moore – Chair of Governors

The school team work alongside our independent Education Welfare Team: LW Consultancy Ltd Attendance Welfare Services

The Attendance Team meet regularly to monitor attendance concerns. Our Attendance Welfare Officer visits the school 12 times per year (twice per term) to meet with parents/ carers where attendance concerns have been identified.

When a concern has been raised, initial letters of concern will go to parents and carers and attendance will be monitored weekly. If attendance does not improve, or if families request support, a meeting will be arranged to decide a way forward. Where a child has 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence in a 10-week period, the family will be referred to our Attendance Welfare officer and a fine may be issued. All attendance concerns are dealt with on an individual basis. We understand that there can be many barriers to good attendance and that sometimes specific individual support is required. We will take all necessary steps to support families to ensure all children attend school on time every day.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/ carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/ carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Well done to all our families who have made sure children are in school on time every day so that children can take full advantage of the learning and social development opportunities offered at Icklesham Church of England Primary School and Nursery.