



# Iffley Academy Attendance Policy

Written

April 2021

Date of review

April 2023

SLT Lead

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Signed: Head Teacher

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Chair of Trustees

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## **Aims**

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. The Iffley Academy aims to maintain attendance levels of 94% or more.

This policy has been developed in consultation with governors, teachers, County Attendance Officers, parents and guardians. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and the school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It outlines the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

## **Attendance**

The Iffley Academy expects good attendance from its students, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved.

We would ask parents to help the school by notifying us of all absences on the first day if possible, but always to ensure that any absence is covered by a note on your child's return to school. Any absence which is known in advance, e.g. doctors appointment, should be notified to the school in writing beforehand. If absence from school is unavoidable, due to special family circumstances, it may be appropriate for the school to provide a home learning pack, with support from the Therapeutic Support Team.

Our school day starts at 8.50am. Registers are marked shortly after this in line with safeguarding procedures.

## **Absence**

All schools must show the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence. This is a government requirement.

### **Authorised absence can be:**

- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointments - which cannot be arranged outside school hours.  
*It would not be expected that this would take a whole day, but part of a morning or afternoon session.*
- Days of religious observance.

Should an explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

### **Unauthorised absence can be:**

- Truancy
- Staying at home to look after younger students or sick relatives.



- Any absence, which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone.
- Any family holiday which is taken in term time

### **Request for holidays in term time**

Holidays during term time are not permitted. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school may consider authorising absence in very exceptional circumstances but parents must apply in advance for permission.

If a child is taken out of school for an unauthorised holiday it may be referred to the attendance team and a penalty fine may be imposed.

### **Sixth Form Attendance**

If a student chooses to stay on to sixth form at The Iffley Academy then good attendance is essential.

Attendance in sixth form will be monitored in the same way as the main school (see below) and poor attendance may lead to the student's place in sixth form being reconsidered.

### **Celebrating good attendance**

Students are praised for good attendance and we have a number of rewards in place for positive attendance. There are also prizes at the end of every school term for students whose attendance is consistently high or has significantly improved.

Good attendance means that students usually make good, consistent progress in their school work.

### **Monitoring attendance**

Attendance is monitored on a daily basis and class groups and percentage figures are monitored on a weekly basis. The Student Wellbeing and Therapeutic Support Manager is responsible for this monitoring.

Teachers will note both authorised and unauthorised absences in the registers and this is followed up by the Student Wellbeing and Therapeutic Support Manager.

Any concerns that the school believes needs additional support to ensure students maintain excellent attendance, will be brought to the attention of the school's County Attendance Officer who has the authority to issue penalty notices or fines.

### **Penalty Notices and Legal Action**

#### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:



The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall ensure they receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To their age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to students who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning, which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence 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 parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary,



they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **First Day Response**

If a student is absent from school and we have not been informed, either by telephone or letter, a phone call home will be made to establish the reasons for the absence. This will happen on the **first day of your child's absence from school**.

For students living in the Oxford area, if they have a medical/ dental appointment, we do not expect them to take a full day off school. If they have a slight illness e.g.: headache, stomach ache etc, a date for a likely return to school will be asked for. If the reason given does not warrant an authorised absence, you will be and advised on how to avoid unauthorised absence in the future.

It will also be explained that a major factor in making these calls is to ensure that the student concerned is safe. All phone calls are made with the utmost consideration of the needs and feelings of the recipient and politeness is a primary factor.

If we are unable to make contact by telephone, a letter will be sent home requesting an explanation for the absence. Any pattern of regular absentees will be identified and support will be offered by the school, in finding solutions for raising attendance. Many problems such as bullying or family difficulties can therefore be detected early and support given to students and parents to address these issues swiftly.

### **Third Day Response**

For safeguarding reasons if we have not heard within three days then we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is then we will make a home visit. However if we are unable to get a response then we will may report it to the police as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.

### **Pupil Missing From Education**

*Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 5 consecutive school days and the school are unable to make contact with the family must be referred to the LCSS. LCSS will visit the home three times. If this is unsuccessful then the police will visit the home. If the pupil cannot be located, a MP1 form must be completed and sent to the Students Missing Education Administrator.*

### **Remember**

1. Email or ring the school, if at all possible on the first day of absence. 01865 747606
2. Or send a written message when your child returns to school.

### **Teenage Pregnancy Protocol**

- The protocol for supporting teenage pregnancy is available through OCC.



- The County Attendance Officers will ensure that the Protocol is followed and the appropriate meetings are held and recorded.

**Other relevant policies and key documents:**

Keeping Children Safe in Education

The Iffley Academy Safeguarding Policy

The Iffley Academy Behaviour Policy

Children Missing in Education