



Nurturing and inspiring all children to achieve their best

30th September 2024

Attendance Update

Dear Parents/Carers,

Ivingswood Academy is committed to ensuring that your child receives the best possible education to prepare them for every stage of their life. Each school day is carefully planned, and each lesson informs a wider programme of learning; every lesson really does count. The government has placed a high burden on all schools to take a proactive approach to tackling school absence. There are concerns regarding absence of students in schools nationally, and therefore there are significant changes in the law regarding attendance as of 6th September 2024 which we are required to adhere to.

The legal changes are as follows:

There is a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions equivalent to 5 school days (each morning and afternoon counts as one session) within a rolling 10 school week period, after which a penalty notice must be considered. The new rules mean it is no longer possible to take a child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.

It is the policy of this school to not authorise absence for leave during term time. While permission can be given in very exceptional circumstances, this is rare and can only be granted by the Headteacher. Any such request should be sent in writing before the holiday is taken and there should be no assumption that permission will be granted.

If term time leave is taken without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral made to the Local Authority Attendance Team. This may result in the issue of an Education Penalty Notice under section 444A Education Act 1996 in respect of each absent child, to each parent/carer. Penalty notices are intended as an alternative to prosecution.

The penalty fine will be £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid within that time, then it will rise to £160 per child. Schools will also have to liaise with siblings' schools so that the local authority can take a whole family approach.

If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child/children within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 per child and there will be no lower rate option.

If leave is taken for a third time in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

Furthermore, you need to be aware of the strategies we as a school have adopted to improve attendance.

We monitor attendance through our internal register system. If your child is going to be absent for any reason, you must contact the school by 9am. You can do this via phone, text or email.

If the absence is due to medical reasons, or if they are off for longer than two days, we may ask you to provide medical evidence such as a doctor's appointment card or a copy of the prescription.

Reminders about timescales for sickness

Any occurrence of sickness and diarrhoea means that children cannot return to school for 48 hours from the last occurrence. Please do not send your child to school before the 48 hours is up, as we will be contacting you to collect them.

Doctor's and dentist's appointments

Whilst we understand that it can be challenging to get an appointment with a GP or dentist, we would like to remind parents that all GP and dental appointments should be taken outside of school time. Absence to attend routine GP or dental appointments will be coded as M and evidence of the appointment will be required; without this the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Hospital appointments

If your child is required to attend a hospital appointment, please can you inform the school office or Mrs Dalton and provide them with a copy of the medical appointment letter. This information is then kept on file.

Late arrivals

School opens at 8:45am and remain open until 8.55am. Children arriving after 8:55am will need to be taken to the school office by an adult to complete the late form on the school Ipad. Please see Drop off and Collection Policy for further information.

Children who arrive after 8:55am will be recorded as late. Children who arrive after 9am will be recorded late after the register has closed and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. We would like to remind parents that the number of unauthorised absences is cumulative across a 10-week rolling period.

We would like to thank you for your continued support with this important matter. We have produced three simple flowcharts to support parents with understanding the approach to lateness, term time leave requests and how we will be monitoring attendance. These are also available on our website for your convenience. The flowcharts will also provide information about how we work with families where a child's attendance is less than 95%.

We are committed to working together with parents to ensure that every child is able to attend school as frequently as possible.

Kind regards,

Mrs C Flynn

Head of School