



Ivingswood Academy Attendance Policy 2025-2026

Updated: September 2025

Next review: Autumn Term 2026

1. Introduction

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

Ivingswood Academy believe that regular school 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.

We value 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.

We recognise 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.

1. 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 5th 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 16.

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.

2. 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 school 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 must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school 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 an email from the parent informing the school 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 Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show evidence of the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances: Ivingswood Academy 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 Headteacher. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Exclusion or suspension (no alternative provision made): Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

Arrival at school:

Gates open at 8.45am. Gates close at 8.55am

Late Arrival: Registration begins at 8:45am when the gates open and gates close at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but having arrived late. All pupils arriving after 8.55am must be signed in by a parent via Vpass with a reason given for lateness. The register will close at 9.10am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as unauthorised. Persistent lateness may result in a fixed penalty notice.

Absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment and evidence can be provided. (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: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

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

Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Buckinghamshire Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Leave of Absence and Extended Leave: Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday or any leave, 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. Schools are not permitted to authorise absence for holidays.

In order to avoid leave being marked as an unauthorised absence, parents requesting to take their child out of school during term time must complete and submit an 'Absence Request Form' (available from the school office) a month in advance **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

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, it is expected that:

- Parents must contact school should any delays occur

If permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases, the school will refer the matter to the County Attendance Team who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If permission for leave of absence is not requested, and school are aware of this leave and have evidence to support this, they will still refer the matter to the County Attendance Team.

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

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for religious observance by completing the leave of absence form ahead of time.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, 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 school 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 school 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 school.

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.

Ivingswood 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 will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Ivingswood Academy 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

We 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.

3. 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 school 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 school 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 school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school 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 school have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil

Ivingswood Academy will follow Buckinghamshire Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, LAC (governors), parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

All members of 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 school approach which reinforces good school 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 school 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 school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and aspire
- Contact the school 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 school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bedtimes, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Not take their child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

5. Support Systems

Ivingswood Academy recognise 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 school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We 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 school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

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

6. Legal Sanctions

The school must consider requesting Buckinghamshire Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child



IVINGSWOOD ACADEMY
APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As a parent or carer, you should fill in this form if you need to take your child out of school during term time for reasons other than medical or educational appointments.

After completing the form, please return it to the school office no less than 3 weeks before the date when you want the period of absence to start.

As you will know, amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2013 make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

CHILD'S NAME _____ CLASS _____

DATES OF ABSENCE: From _____ To _____

NUMBER OF DAYS: _____

REASON FOR ABSENCE:

REASON WHY YOU ARE UNABLE TO ARRANGE THIS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES:

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

For office use only:

Unauthorised _____ Days Authorised _____ Days Code _____

Your request for _____ days leave of absence has been considered and will be recorded as

follows: Unauthorised _____ Days Authorised _____ Days

Should you have any queries about this decision please contact the Headteacher via the school office.

Child's Name _____ Class _____



Penalty Notices for School Attendance

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following will come into force for absences that start after 19th August 2024. This is nationwide and across borders if you move school or house. **Term Time Leave is only allowed in exceptional circumstances when communicated in advance with evidence provided as soon as possible to the Headteacher.**

FIRST OFFENCE

The first Penalty Notice issued for Term Time Leave of Absence or Irregular Attendance, the amount of the fine will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days and reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid with 21 days

SECOND OFFENCE

For the second Penalty Notice (within three years of the first offence) issued for Term Time Leave of Absence or Irregular Attendance, the amount of the fine will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered

THIRD OFFENCE AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENCES

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave of Absence or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. If found guilty there could be up to a maximum fine of £2,500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU
COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR
CHILD'S SCHOOL**

In law only the headteacher of a school can authorise a child's absence. A pupil's attendance forms part of their official school record.

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a leave of absence and are strongly advised not to do so.

Headteachers are unable to authorise leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

10 sessions in 10 weeks

Penalty Notices will be considered for any 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks.

5 consecutive days of term time absence can trigger a Penalty Notice.

**Do not forget that Penalty Notices are issued Per Parent. Per Child.
i.e. Two siblings absent would result in each parent receiving 2 fines. This could amount to £640**