



# Inspire Education Trust

Together we achieve, individually we grow

## Attendance & Exceptional Leave - Primary

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**Review Date:** September 2024

## Document History

| Version | Status |  | Date           | Author    | Summary Changes    |
|---------|--------|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|
| V1      |        |  | September 2022 | R Darling | Review and rewrite |
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## Introduction

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting your own child, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. **Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.**

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

In our Multi Academy Trust (MAT), we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our schools a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## 1 Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

- 1.1 Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and all schools in our Trust are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising leave. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.
- 1.4 Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a fixed penalty, which is currently £60 per parent per child up to 28 days.

Our Policy now reflects latest DfE Guidance contained in Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

## 2 The Main Pillars of Our Attendance Strategy Are:

### 2.1 EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

### 2.2 MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

### 2.3 LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to

attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

## 2.4 FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

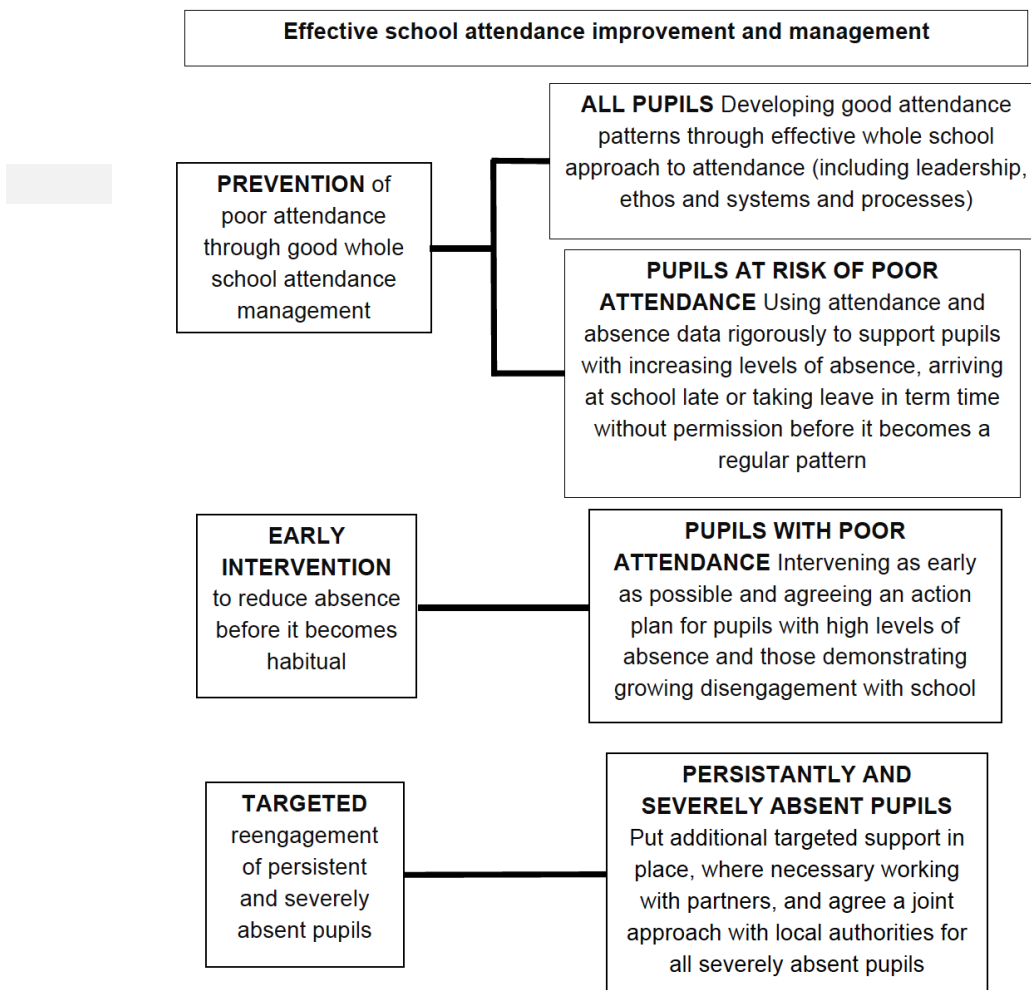
## 2.5 FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

## 2.6 ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Categories of school attendance are broken down into 3 aspects: Prevention, Early Intervention and Targeted Support.



### 3 What are Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?

#### 3.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not make it an authorised absence.

#### *Leave of Absence*

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances**, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the appropriate County Council. The County Council have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with their Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to the County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

### 3.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### 3.3 Procedures

3.3.1 The school day begins at 8:45 am.

3.3.2 The register is taken once the children have settled into class. If a child is not present when the register is taken, they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school later than 9:15am they are given an unauthorised absence mark.

3.3.3 The afternoon session begins at 1:15pm and the same procedures apply. Inspire primaries including Clifford Bridge, Hearsall, Walsgrave and Whittle Academies all have Nursery provision. Sessions start at different times dependent on the time parents have booked their children in.

3.3.4 Morning sessions typically start at 8:30am and the afternoon session at 12:30 pm. Persistent absence in Nursery may result in your child being removed from the roll.

### 3.4 If a child is absent without notification

3.4.1 Where no notification has been received by 9:30 am a text message/call will automatically be sent to the parents/carers via the School Office.

3.4.2 If there is no response to the message and there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school's Pastoral Team, who will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

3.4.3 The Pastoral Manager will provide a list of vulnerable children to the School Office, Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher which will provide information in the order of priority i.e. Family member, Social Worker, Attendance Officer.

### 3.5 Missing children

3.5.1 If a child is missing and whereabouts unknown, the school will follow the LA procedures and contact CME after 10 days they then take immediate steps to locate the child.

### 3.6 Written Notification of absence

3.6.1 Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, for example, the note should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence.

## 4 Requests for exceptional leave of absence

4.1 If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made on the appropriate form (Coventry Primary version and Warwickshire Primary version) ideally at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the School Office. (See appendix 1)

- 4.2 The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application.
- 4.3 If the child is leaving the country the additional documentation detailed on the Exceptional Leave Request form must be provided.

## **5 Warwickshire Schools**

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.

## **6 Home Visits**

If a parent does not communicate the reason for a child's absence on the third day of absence a home visit will be made. If there are any additional concerns around a family, this may be made sooner.

## **7 Attendance Champion**

Each Inspire primary academy has an attendance champion. This person will support the Headteacher, senior leadership team and class teachers support high attendance for all children and aid communication of key messages. As part of their role they will regularly meet with the Headteacher and may attend senior team meetings.

Clifford Bridge Academy – Margaret Sutherland  
Hearsall Community Academy – Tracie Bailey  
Stockingford Academy - Debbie Lloyd  
Walsgrave Academy – Michelle Smith  
Whittle Academy - Luke Harris

If the documentation indicates that a child is going to a Country where FGM is practised then School may contact the emergency services on 101 and provide them with the details about the child.

## **8 Long Term Absence Through Child's Accident or Illness**

If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **9 Repeated Unauthorised Absences**

- 9.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 9.2 The Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.



## 10 Rewards for good attendance

All Inspire Primaries have a range of attendance initiatives to reward and highlight the importance of attendance in our schools. Below are examples (not exhaustive) of some of the rewards and celebrations that are arranged across the year.

|  |
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| <b>Each Week</b>   |
| -Non uniform Friday<br>-Every week, each classes attendance will be measured (Monday - Friday). The class which has the highest attendance or 100% will be invited to wear non-uniform on the Friday of that week as a reward – including the class teacher and TA!<br>-This will be communicated on a Thursday afternoon to the children and parents and celebrated on the school newsletter each week. |
| <b>Each Half Term</b>  |
| -Children who have 100% attendance each week will be given a Golden Attendance Ticket.<br>-At the end of each half term there will be a raffle draw to pick an attendance winner from each Phase of the school (EYFS, KS1, LKS2 & UKS2). Obviously, the more tickets a pupil has, the greater chance they have of winning.   |
| <b>End of each Term</b>  |
| -At the end of each term, any child with 100% attendance will receive a '100% Attendance Certificate Award' in special assembly.<br>-Most improved attendance will also be awarded from each year-group.   |
| <b>End of the Academic Year</b>  |
| -Special 100% attendance assembly where children will receive 100% Attendance Trophy.  |
| <b>Each Week (where attendance is needing to be a school priority focus)</b>   |
| -Class individual attendance will be displayed on the classroom door.<br>-The class with the best attendance each week will receive 5 minutes extra play on a Friday (or 5-minute afternoon play). This will run in each Phase of the school – EYFS, KS1, LKS2 and UKS2.   |

## 11 Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are set by the Head of Education, Primary and agreed by the senior staff and Governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

## 12 Monitoring

12.1 It is the responsibility of the Trust Standards Committee to monitor and challenge overall attendance. The Standards Committee will examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels. The Head Teacher will produce an termly reports to the Local Governing Body.

12.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years.

12.3 Senior Leaders will monitor phase/ class and individual attendance weekly as part of the focus and drive to ensure all children attend school fully. This information will be disseminated to Pastoral Managers, those support staff specifically responsible for attendance and class teachers.

12.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, as well as for taking

action on day-to-day absences, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer-term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they must report this to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

### **13 Review**

The policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

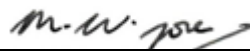
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**Approved by Directors:** 3 November 2022

Signed:



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Lois Whitehouse  
CEO



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Mark Gore  
Chair of Standards