

INCLUSIVE | MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

ATTENDANCE POLICY

DOCUMENT DETAIL

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: Please note, Appendix A has been created in line with the current government guidance.

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Statement of Intent

The Inclusive Multi Academy Trust believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:
 - “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
 - to age, ability and aptitude, and
 - to any special educational needs he/she may have
 - Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) ‘School attendance’
- DfE (2015) ‘Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England’
- DfE (2020) ‘Keeping children safe in education’
- DfE (2016) ‘Children missing education’
- DfE (2020) ‘Improving school attendance’

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The Trust board has overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education procedure in place and that this is regularly reviewed.

The governing committee is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy and procedures.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school’s Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to ‘Keeping children safe in education’ (2020) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.
- Ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy (if the school has an attendance policy) of their children's school
- Impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- Work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Notify their children's school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed when the children return to school
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- Should not book holidays during term time
- Provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Update the school if their details change.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending school, on time, prepared and ready to learn.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- "Absence" as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
- An "authorised absence" as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
- An "unauthorised absence" as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- "Persistent absenteeism" as:
 - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Absence procedures

- Parents will contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- Parents will contact the school via phone or written communication on the first day that their child returns to school to explain why they were absent. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- A phone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer.

- The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.
- If a pupil's attendance drops below 85 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Attendance register

- The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:
 - Present.
 - Absent.
 - Attending an approved educational visit.
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at: www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance
- The following codes will be used:
 - / = Present in the morning
 - \ = Present in the afternoon
 - L = Late arrival before the register has closed
 - C = Authorised absence
 - E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
 - H = Authorised holiday
 - I = Illness
 - M = Medical or dental appointments
 - R = Religious observance
 - B = Off-site education activity
 - G = Unauthorised holiday
 - O = Unauthorised absence
 - U = Arrived after registration closed
 - N = Reason not yet provided
 - X = Not required to be in school
 - T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
 - V = Educational visit or trip
 - P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
 - D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
 - Y = Exceptional circumstances
 - Z = Pupil not on admission register
- When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.
- All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.
- Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.
- An agreed member of the staff will complete the 'Educational setting status form' on a daily basis, based on the information on the attendance register.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence

- The SLT will:
 - Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
 - Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.

- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a weekly tutor review.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.
- The governing committee will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.
- Pupils potentially at greater risk of harm who need a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences.
- Teaching staff will:
 - Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
 - Meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
 - Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
 - Lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
 - Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
 - Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

Lateness

- Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- Schools should take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness should be monitored and followed up.
- School brochures and the website should clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. School should not keep a register open for the whole session.
- When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

Term-time leave

- Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- The headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in highly exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
 - Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

Missing children

- Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the headteacher.
- The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
 - The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
 - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.

- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Religious observances

- Parents will inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. Up to two days will be granted per year.

Appointments

- As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
 - Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
 - If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
 - Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

- Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).
- Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance will request a licence from the LA.
- The organiser will allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.
- The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:
 - The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
 - The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.
- The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.
- The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.
- The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.
- The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
 - For not less than six hours a week; and

- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.
- Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.
- Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent.
- Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.
- The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.
- The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.
- Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.
- A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.
- The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
 - Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
 - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
 - Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.
- The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.
- If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.
- The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

Part time timetables

- All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs.
- A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement.
- The school should mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).
- Guidance on part-time timetables is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Flexi-schooling

- Headteachers can agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents take on the responsibility for their child's education for part of the school week.
- Headteachers are advised to consider any such requests from parents very carefully before agreeing to them and are advised to draw up a written agreement with the parent.
- Where agreement has been reached, pupils should be marked authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (Code C).
- Guidance on flexi-schooling timetables is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Rewarding good attendance

- The school acknowledges good attendance in a number of ways:
 - 100, 99 and 98 percent attendance certificates at the end of the year
 - Publishing class, key stage and whole school data in the newsletter and on the website
 - Celebrating individual attendance and punctuality

Monitoring and review

- The Inclusive Multi Academy Trusts attendance target is 96 percent.
- The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.

Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) - Attendance Team

- The ISL Attendance Team fulfils the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities, for details of the services on offer see <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Penalty notices

- Parents whose children fail to attend school regularly are committing an offence (Section 444 Education Act 1996). A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.
- In such cases, the school will:
 - In the first instance, issue a warning to parents and allow them 15 days to improve the situation.
 - Follow this first warning with a formal written notification, explaining that actions may be taken
 - Submit an application to issue a penalty notice to the Attendance Improvement Officer
- Notices may be issued to each parent liable for the offence. Penalties are paid to the Local Authority and are as follows:
 - The penalty is £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days, but this is reduced to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days.
 - If not paid in full by the end of 28 days after receipt details will be forwarded to the Local Authority, who may prosecute. The academy may be
 - required to provide a witness statement and staff may be required to give evidence in court.
 - There is no right of appeal against the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
 - No parent will receive more than two separate notices per twelve-month period, but there is no restriction on the number of formal warnings
 - which may be given.
- The full guidance on Fixed Penalty Notices can be obtained by contacting the Area Senior Attendance Improvement Officer.

Appendix A - Attendance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

From September 2020, all pupils are required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government guidance to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

The school will have due regard for the DfE's ['Recording attendance during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak'](#) guidance when recording attendance during the pandemic.

Attendance expectations from September

- As of September 2020, attendance is mandatory for all pupils.
- From September, the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) apply, including:
 - Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
 - The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures in the main body of this policy.
 - The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Shielding or self-isolating pupils

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August. This means that pupils who were shielding can return to school, as can pupils who have family members who were shielding.
- Pupils who are no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional should discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. Parents should inform the school of any particular measures that need to be in place to ensure their child can return to school safely.
- The school understands that there will be occasions where some pupils may not be able to attend school due to coronavirus, including for the following reasons:
 - They are self-isolating and have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus.
 - Rates of coronavirus in the local area have risen and certain individuals are asked to temporarily shield.
- Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised.
- Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they will be immediately offered access to remote learning, in line with the Pupils Remote Learning Policy.

Reluctance to return to school

- Parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.
- If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.