

INGHAM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**December 2023**

The school aims to work together with parents to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually.

Aims:

It is recognised that

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in Ingham School in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and /or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.

The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens, with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

Keeli Hutchinson (Headteacher) has overall responsibility for attendance in school. The Headteacher can be contacted via the school office or via admin@ingham.lincs.sch.uk

We expect the following from our children:

- That they will attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from our parents and carers:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the school as soon as possible, preferably on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by Class Dojo or in person.
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence - only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. (Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.)
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives as the doors open at 8.45am in order that they are in the classroom for the start of registration (at 8:55am). If a child arrives after 8:55am his/her parent should report directly to the school office.
- To contact the school in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents/carers and children can expect the following from school:

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance with both the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

- The school will open to pupils at 8:45 and will close at 3:25pm. Registers will be taken twice daily at 8:55am and at 1.00pm. Registers will close at 9:25 and at 1:30. If a pupil arrives between 8:55 and 9:25am they will be considered as 'late' and marked in the register with an 'L'. This will be recorded on CPOMS for monitoring purposes. Regular lateness has an impact on the child's learning. If a child regularly arrives late at school, parents/carers will be contacted. If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they will be recorded with an unauthorised absence for that session and coded 'U'. We want to provide the very best education for every child at our school. This is only possible if children attend school regularly and on-time. We expect all children to arrive at school punctually. Poor punctuality is not acceptable and highly disruptive to the children and the class.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance data onto the school MIS (Scholarpack) using the correct codes as recommended by the DFE. The registers are checked each week in order to ensure that these are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.
- Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, the Headteacher should be informed as soon as possible.
- Should a child be absent, the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation be received from the child's parent, the school administrator will make contact with the parent/carer by telephone first and then through Class Dojo.
- All absence notes from parents should be passed to the school office. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher (who may then choose to speak to the parents concerned).
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Encouraging attendance through good practice and rewards.
- Challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence and inform the headteacher/DSL's immediately of any serious concerns.
- The Headteacher will be informed if there is no response to attempted contact when a child is absent.
- The Headteacher will regularly collect attendance data and discuss any concerns with governors.

Encouraging Attendance through Good Practice and Reward

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of each session.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance. A 'gold' award using the Lincolnshire County Council's Certificate for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence)
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of transition between KS2 and 3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school
- Where appropriate sending parents termly/weekly absence reports, together with targets for improvement
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems provide valuable year group, class and pupil level attendance data which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by the school

Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend, the school will respond efficiently and effectively

- If a note, telephone call or email is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first morning of absence by telephone first and the time and date of this call, and answerphone message if left, is recorded on Scholarpack. If non-attendance continues, further phone calls will take place each subsequent morning and a letter may be sent or a home visit conducted. If, after 3 days of unexplained absence, the school has been unable to contact the parents to satisfy itself that all is well, then the police may be requested to make a 'safe and well check.' It is extremely important that parents inform the school immediately with any changes in contact numbers.
- If there has been no improvement in attendance, then parents will be invited to attend an action plan meeting/School Attendance Panel meeting in school. The meeting will include the appropriate staff, parents and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school. An action plan will be drawn up in this meeting between the family and the school. The plan is to support the family in improving attendance and the plan must be adhered to for 6 weeks.
- Where non-attendance continues with no contact having been made with parents for 5 days, the Local authority will be informed that the child is a child missing education. If there is no improvement in attendance, then a referral will be made and discussed with the Local Authority/CME (Child Missing Education Team). Following the referral of any matter to the Local Authority, the school will take part fully in monitoring the situation and work fully with the relevant parties and agencies in the interest of the individual child.
- The school will send letters out to parents of any child whose attendance has fallen below 95% in any term. These letters will be sent out at the end of terms 1- 6. If there has been no improvement in attendance, the parents/carers will be invited into the school for an action plan meeting/'Attendance Panel' meeting with the headteacher.
- Should a child's attendance fall below the National figure for 'persistent absence' (currently 90%), the school will initiate a meeting with the parents of the child which may take the form of a School Attendance Panel.
- School Attendance Panel meetings will be chaired by the Headteacher and will be attended by a representative governor and the child's class teacher. They may also be attended by the SENCO. The purpose of the meeting will be to agree actions and set targets for improvements in attendance and to offer support where this is needed.

Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfES Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99)
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SENCO may be required.
- Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees.

Child Missing in Education (CME)

- The school follows the Lincolnshire Safeguarding procedures and will make enquiries into the location of children with continuous unauthorised absence or those who fail to return from leave of absence during term time.
- After 5 days of absence, school will complete a School Risk Assessment for Child Missing Education (CME) and forward to the CME officer at the Local authority.

Honesty

Please be aware that any children who are absent because they are ill but inform friends or staff that they were on holiday, school does have the authority to challenge this with the parents and ascertain the reason for the absence. Accordingly, the absence may then be treated as unauthorised, and you may be fined. It is also important to consider the message this is sending to the children; hearing responsible adults 'bending' the truth does not provide appropriate role models.

Liaising With External Agencies

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone. We therefore build strong relationships with services who work with children such as:

- The Working Together Team (formerly EBSS)
- Educational Psychologists
- SEN services
- Social Services
- Local Police

Absence

All absences are classed as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason for the absence is given. However, it is the school's responsibility and final decision to authorise any absence. Satisfactory reasons for absence are:

- Illness-children should be absent following recommended time scales as set by Department for Health/NHS/Health Protection Agency. If it is a mild illness the child should still attend. Parents should inform the Administrator/Class teacher and if the condition worsens, parents will be contacted to collect their child.
- The school reserves the right to request medical proof of illness/absence such as a medical certificate or ask parents to provide evidence e.g. appointment card, prescription or doctors note. The onus of proof is on the parent/carer.
- Exceptional circumstances as deemed by the headteacher.

Request for leave of absence during term time

- If a family needs to request a leave of absence in term-time then an Application for Leave of absence form must be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date. The head teacher will then decide whether to not to authorise the absence request based on current guidance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

The head teacher will consider each request and permission will only be granted where the circumstances are exceptional and in line with current guidance such as:

- Death of a grandparent/sibling/parent
- Life threatening or critical illness of grandparent, parent or sibling
- Religious observance

Family holidays

The school dates are published a year in advance and are published on the school's website. We expect that parents/carers will book their family holidays within the school holiday dates. Parents still have a duty of care to ensure the school is fully informed if they intend to take their children out of school without authorisation for safeguarding purposes.

Please note that any leave of absence, for the purpose of a holiday, which equals 4.5 days or more within a 6-week period may result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Dental and medical appointments

Whilst the school will grant request for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, wherever possible, to book medical and dental appointments out of the school day. When appointments are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance, in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected/returned to school. Children who leave/return to school for a medical/dental appointment must be signed in or out of the relevant book.

Penalty Notices

If attendance is raised as a concern, appropriate actions are taken which include letters, offered meetings, School attendance panel meetings, home visits, phone call and possible EHA's-Early Help Assessments. If attendance does not improve, further actions may include legal proceedings.

If absence is not authorised by the headteacher, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and noted on the child's record. This could result in a fixed penalty notice of up to £120 per parent, per child under section 44b of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.

Implementation

For this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance high priority. The Headteacher will report on attendance to the Governing body at each Full Governing Board meeting (FGB). The Headteacher

This policy received the full agreement of the Governing Body.

Review

This attendance policy will be reviewed annually.