



**Inspiring Futures
Through Learning**

Inspiring Futures Through Learning

Attendance Core Values

(updated with Covid-19 response)

May 2020 to July 2021

At Inspiring Futures through Learning, we are driven by our pursuit of excellence every day. We have high expectations of learning, behaviour and respect for every member of our community. We create independent, articulate thinkers and learners who have the confidence in, not only their individual ambitions, but also those of the Academy and The Trust as a whole. We have collaboration at the heart of everything we do and our vision is to nurture exciting, innovative, outstanding Academies who embrace change and provide a world-class education for all it serves.

IFTL is a trust established by educationalists, with education and improving outcomes for children at the heart of all we do.



Scope: IFtL Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) & Academies within the MAT	
Version: V4 – 25/05/20	Filename: IFtL – Attendance
Approval: Attendance Values 2019 This policy was ratified by the IFtL Trustees on 27 th May 2020.	Next Review on or before: July 2021 <i>This policy will be reviewed annually by the IFtL Executive committee and approved by the Trustees at least on an annual basis</i>
Owner: IFtL Trustees	Union Status: Not applicable

Policy type:	
Statutory	Website compliancy

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IFtL Attendance Core Values

Vision

At IFtL Trust Schools, we are relentlessly driven by our pursuit of excellence and high expectations of learning, behaviour and respect for every member of our community. We strive to promote and create responsible citizens who are punctual and who have consistently high rates of attendance.

Aspirations

We strive to promote and create responsible citizens who:

- Arrive to school on time and ready to start the day calmly and focussed prepared for learning.
- Excellent levels of attendance for all groups of pupils.

Core Values

We believe everyone within the IFtL community has the right:

1. To learn
2. To be respected
3. To be safe and supported

To achieve these things children need to be in school on time and regularly.

Success indicators

All schools within the trust will implement the following indicators:

- Average attendance for the school is above National Average.
- Persistent absence is below National Average.
- There is no difference between the attendance for any groups of pupils.
- All groups of pupils arrive punctually and ready for learning.
- Strategies and interventions in place to address any concerns with regards to attendance, absence and punctuality; these will promote attendance as a whole school approach and bespoke, personalised approaches for individual pupils and any vulnerable group(s) identified with concerns in relation to attendance and punctuality.

Promotion of Attendance and Punctuality

At IFtL and within all IFtL schools, we believe it is important to focus on the positive and promote excellent levels of attendance and punctuality using praise, recognition and rewards. The specific reward and recognition systems and the code of practice will be pertinent and bespoke to each of the schools whilst adopting the core values and principles of the IFtL.

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Principles

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence on the part of the parent that can result in legal action.

High levels of attendance are crucial for so many areas of development and gives your child the best opportunities to achieve and progress to their maximum potential. It promotes not only their learning and educational abilities but provides many life skills and long-term positive work ethics. Children who have good levels of attendance are more likely to be able to progress socially, have enhanced self-esteem and confidence, develop time management skills, have a good understanding of expectations for future life and develop a respect for the importance of punctuality and attendance.

Importantly, the more time they are in school the more time they have for learning. Even a child with 90% attendance equals $\frac{1}{2}$ day missed every week and over a school year that would equate to one month out of school, that means they are missing 100 lessons.

Every child is sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families may be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at an early stage. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter; it may even make things worse.

Definitions

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Any information about the cause of each absence is always required, if possible in writing, evidence will be required to support some absences.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those that the staff at school do not consider reasonable, or for During the Covid-19 response period, all areas of Safer Recruitment Policy are applicable and the information below is in addition.

Please refer to the IFtL Safer Recruitment Policy:

https://iftltrust.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/EfxfnUS1TIJBtb5T2_U3_4B0iJL1Judz79wypUB2vUCiA?e=OI3d6L

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1. All schools are expected to continue to follow safer recruitment processes, in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#). This includes keeping the Single Central Register up to date.
2. The school will discuss with the applicant various options for interviews including video calls, in line with public health guidelines around social distancing.
3. The school will be mindful and sensitive to the individual circumstances of the applicant when arranging interviews. Schools will be flexible and reasonable to applicants in accommodating interviews, potentially delaying them if need be.
4. Schools should continue to adhere to employment laws, including the Equalities Act 2010, to ensure that applicants have equality of opportunity throughout the selection process.
5. When recruiting, schools must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre-appointment checks. This includes obtaining references, checking ID and right to work, checking qualifications and updating the Single central Record.

Please note that the following temporary changes have been made to the DBS standard and enhanced ID checking guidance:

- ID documents to be viewed over video link
- scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted
- the applicant will be required to present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role

which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence on the part of the parent and include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason.
- Truancy from a whole session.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Children arriving at school too late to get a mark.
- Taking holidays during term-time, this includes attending a family wedding.

Parents and Carers' Responsibilities

We believe close and collaborative working relationships with parents / carers are very important and central to all children being as successful as they can be. Parents and carers are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together.

In line with government recommendations and requirements, all schools within the IFTL will not be able to authorise absences for holidays, shopping, looking after other children or adults, birthdays, day trips, tiredness, concerts and the like. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency or exceptional circumstances, for example, for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of close relative). Where absence is authorised, for exceptional circumstance

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only, evidence for the school records will be requested to support justification for granting authorisation for a pupil to be absent from school.

Parents / carers are required to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed in advance and given evidence for this appointment (for example, a medical letter). A 'present' mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole session.

All schools within IFtL will have clear strategies for information sharing with all parents/ carers so they are fully informed about their child's attendance and punctuality including for excellent attendance in recognition of the success within these areas.

Objectives

To promote good attendance. This is vital to children's educational achievement, well-being and keeping them safe.

To convey clearly to parents and children that:

- Regular attendance is essential.
- Regular or frequent lateness at the start and end of each session is unacceptable.
- Unjustifiable absence will be investigated and may be recorded as unauthorised absence.

To keep records of attendance which:

- Clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of ^{[[1]]}attendance rates.
- Show lateness so that patterns may be addressed.

To build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:

- Responding rapidly to children's absence.
- Recognising and celebrating children who maintain 'excellent', 'good' and 'improving' attendance.
- Sharing attendance figures with parents and carers.
- Targeting attendance where it has been an issue and putting in place strategies to support improvement.
- Targeting persistent lateness where it has been an issue and putting in place techniques to ensure improvement.
- Sharing information – each school will make its policy on attendance clear to parents and children through:
 - Sharing information and expectations prior to admission.
 - The use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance or punctuality that require parental response.

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- Clear systems and procedures to address all pupil absence and lateness.

Factors affecting attendance:

The main factors affecting attendance of children are:

- Illness of the child.
- Illness of siblings or parents.
- Health Services Appointments.
- Religious observance.
- Holidays.

All staff within IFtL schools understand their safeguarding responsibilities to keep children and families protected from safeguarding and child protection issues, for example radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour (Prevent Duty) and Female Genital Mutilation, by being alert to patterns of absence. If there are safeguarding or child protection concerns about a child's non-attendance, this would result in contact with the MASH for further advice and support.

Targets and Expectations for all IFtL Schools.

- The target for attendance for each school and for all groups of pupils will be in line with or above National averages.
- Persistent absence for all groups of pupils is to be in line with or lower than National averages.
- Attendance will be regularly monitored and analysed for all groups of pupils and actions will be swiftly taken to address any concerns in relation to attendance for all pupils, including vulnerable groups such as disadvantaged and SEND.
- If a pupil falls below the school target, strategies will be implemented quickly to raise their attendance. There will be a staged approach to increasing concerns with lowering percentages of attendance and these will be stated within the school Attendance Policy.
- All children with attendance less than 90% (persistent absentees) will be placed upon the persistent absence register and parents/ carers formally informed and support interventions for the pupil and their family implemented. This adheres to government recommendations.
- Fixed Penalty Notices, in line with government recommendations, will be issued for parent/ carers who remove pupils from schools for unauthorised events and this includes holidays within term time for 10 or more unauthorised sessions. (Since September 2013, the Government have clearly stated that schools cannot authorize any family holiday and authorisation can only be given for 'exceptional circumstances' for example attending a funeral and the day to observe a religious festival).
- All schools will have clear procedures in place formally recorded, for example in the Attendance Policy, for pupils where there are concerns about a 'Child Missing in Education.'

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- All pupils within all schools will be expected to arrive punctually to school. The expected times of arrival into each school and the process to address any 'lates' will be clearly stated within each of the school's Attendance Policy. Punctuality will be closely monitored and addressed as a whole school, group or individual level as appropriate.

Admission Registers, Attendance Registrations and In-Lesson Monitoring

All IFtL schools will ensure admission registers are completed for every child on entry into the school. Formal registration periods both in the morning and the afternoon will be completed and clear procedures to follow up pupil absence in place within each school stated within their school Attendance Policy. In-Lesson monitoring will occur within each school to ensure all pupils are accounted for at all times of the day whilst in school and under the care of the school.

All IFtL schools will ensure:

- Registers of attendance will be kept accurately, indicating clearly when a child is present or absent.
- Lateness will be recorded.

Systems to monitor attendance, absence and punctuality

All schools will ensure they have clear systems and procedures in place stated within their attendance policy to address any absence and this will include processes for a first day response for pupils with no prior explanation of their absence. The systems to promote, monitor and address attendance and punctuality will be clearly stated in each of the school's policy, in line with legislation and recommendations.

Monitoring and evaluation of attendance data

Children's attendance patterns will be regularly analysed, including all key vulnerable groups, within each school. Actions to address any gaps within groups of children will be implemented in a timely manner and any particular specific concerns for a pupil will be discussed with the parent or carer. The impact of strategies implemented will be regularly monitored to ensure they are improving the attendance or punctuality as planned. Attendance figures will be published and reported regularly to parents/ carers, staff, the Governing Body/Committee, or the owner and IFtL Trustees.

Government requirements:

The Government clearly state that all schools must adhere to their recommendations as explained within their 'School Attendance' November 2016 document. The key points are summarised below and all schools within IFtL must comply with these recommendations.

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The government expects schools to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
 - act early to address patterns of absence.
 - Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
 - All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.
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- The law requires all schools to have an admission register (on first day of entry into the school) and an attendance register.
 - All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.
 - All schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.
 - Home Educated Children - On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Schools should not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record.
 - Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session.
 - An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
 - Codes are clearly stated to be used within the registers and these must be adhered to by all IFtL Schools.

Covid-19 Response and Additional Requirements/ Considerations

During Covid-19, there are notable differences and expectations at both a government and trust level which are outlined below.

Within the Government Guidance, 'Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak' there are a number of references to attendance to which all IFtL schools will follow.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing

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From the week commencing 1st June, our schools are welcoming pupils within our early year settings (2-year old and nursery provision), Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, alongside our priority groups (vulnerable and key worker children), to return to school. We are strongly encouraging our children in the eligible groups to attend (unless they fall within a shielding or other vulnerable medical group or are self-isolating) even if parents/ carers are able to keep their children at home so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending school. We are also expecting our vulnerable children to attend school where it is appropriate for them to do so. For our vulnerable children who have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to school where this would now be appropriate for them to do so. For some higher-level need children, including some with EHCPs, this will be informed by individual risk assessments. Children with at least one parent/carer who is critical to the coronavirus response, can attend school if required.

At IFTL, we will adhere to the following:

- Any child who is [clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions](#) and have been advised to shield, will not attend school. They will be provided with home-learning until guidance changes.
- if a child lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the government guidance on shielding, it is advised they only attend school if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and if they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing and therefore they should not attend school and they should be supported to learn at home.
- For clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) children, who are considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus, parents should follow medical advice and work with the school on an individual basis. They will not be allowed to attend school if medical advice recommends this.
- a child who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend school with agreement between the school and parent/ carers.
- A child showing any symptoms or if they are self-isolating due to symptoms in the household they live within, they must not attend school and will not be allowed entry to the school. If a child displays symptoms whilst in school, they will be self-isolated and sent home immediately.
- Attendance of vulnerable pupils and key worker children will be prioritised.
- Contact will be made with families whose absence levels were high before lockdown and support provided to return to regular attendance. A member of staff will be allocated to lead for each of these children to oversee the whole school contact and plan.
- Each school will review and share attendance expectations during this period with all key stakeholders including parents/ carers.
- Advice will be given to parents/ carers re absence notification and reminders of attendance expectations, processes and procedures.
- Maintain usual processes for following up absence including first day responses and make reasonable enquiries if you believe a child is CME rather than a non-attender. Schools will continue to refer cases of concern to CME Team.

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Attendance Requirements

In line with government guidelines, eligible children – including priority groups – are strongly encouraged to attend school, unless they are self-isolating, or they are clinically vulnerable. No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason.

Families must notify the school as per normal processes and procedures if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together. If a child is expected in school and does not attend, first day response processes will be followed, and subsequent actions taken in line with normal school attendance procedures.

If parent/ carers are not sending their children to school, the school and other relevant partners are to work together to support the families and children to return to school.

Government guidelines currently state that parents/ carers will not be fined for non-attendance at this time. Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the law has been relaxed, so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Promotion of attendance and maintain good attendance and punctuality.

We will be actively encouraging parent/ carers to send their children to school if they are an eligible group and/ or are within a priority group (including those who are vulnerable and/ or parent/ carers are key workers). For those children who are eligible to attend but are choosing not to, IFtL schools will maintain regular communication and sensitively explore parent/ carer and child concerns to help support confidence to return to school where appropriate. IFtL children will be permitted to commence at any point, with an agreed time with the head/ senior leaders, throughout the period and all schools will ensure a process is in place to enable this to occur.

At IFtL, all our schools believe in the importance of close and collaborative working relationships with external agencies and families and the children. To this end, all our schools are committed to working together with other agencies, for example social workers and the LA, to support attendance and the families/ child as needed. All our schools will work with families and their child (ren) at an individual level carefully considering the needs and circumstances in a bespoke way to agree the best way to support. Support will also be provided to those families where attendance has been an issue previously.

In circumstances where a parent/ carer does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker (where appropriate) and the school will explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent/ carers. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, the school and social worker will talk through these concerns with the parent/ carers following the advice set out by Public Health England. Schools will continue to inform social workers where children with a social worker do not attend.

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Where applicable, designated safeguarding leads and/or equivalent staff will keep under regular review their lists of vulnerable children who should be attending school. The schools, social workers, local authorities and other professionals will work together to ensure adequate and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep in touch with vulnerable children (whether they are attending provision, or not attending for an agreed or non-agreed reason), such as by letter, phone or visit. To support this, schools will ensure all relevant parties, including parent/ carers, have the correct emergency contact numbers are given any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available and appropriate to do so.

Attendance Registers

When more pupils return to schools from 1 June, schools should resume taking the attendance register. From 1 June, the government are still asking schools to submit the Educational Setting Status form via the online portal reporting whether they are open and how many children and staff are in the school.

Schools need to include within their own policies on how long the register should be kept open and where a school implements staggered start times, they may wish to consider temporarily extending this period.

In line with government recommendations, schools will not be held to account for attendance levels at this time. Schools are required to continue to work with the Local Authorities to monitor the welfare of vulnerable children who are not attending school and will continue to monitor all other children for safeguarding purposes.

Summary

Each school within the IFtL has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents/cares have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All school staff must be committed to working closely with parents/ carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Each school will have their own Attendance Policy in place that:

- adheres to the IFtL expectations
- clearly state all the procedures required for attendance, absence and punctuality,
- the strategies to promote attendance and punctuality
- the steps that will be taken to address any concerns in relation to punctuality, attendance rates less than the school target, absenteeism and unauthorised absence.

Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is everybody's business. IFtL MAT is committed to ensuring that all our children and young people are safe and feel safe. The right to be safe for any member of the IFtL community is a non-negotiable and paramount. Safeguarding and child protection is

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crucial and we are fully committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children and staff. IFtL and all the schools within the Trust must fully adhere to all safeguarding and child protection legislation, policy and procedures at all times and under any circumstances. Any concerns at a Trust level will be referred to IFtL safeguarding Leads, Kim Kemp or Sarah Bennett; within ITTP and/ or TS, Michelle Gardner, and to the relevant designated safeguarding officers within each school for concerns pertinent to children within the school. IFtL fully adheres to all Safeguarding and child protection legislation and MK together partnership requirements, including the Milton Keynes Whistleblowing Policy and procedures.

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