



# IMBERHORNE SCHOOL

## Policy Document



The Cornerstones of our  
Learning Community

Headteacher: Mr Lee Walker

<b>Attendance Policy</b>	
Date of review:	September 2023
Prepared by:	Christian Fallick
Approved by Governing Board:	
Policy based on:	Keeping Children Safe in Education
Date for next review:	September 2024
Links to other policies	Misuse of texts and images Anti-Bullying Policy Behaviour for Learning Policy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

### **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to encourage students to attend school every day and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. It is essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent school attendance.

### **Purpose**

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Imberhorne School by:

1. Encouraging staff, parents / careers and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
2. Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

### **Principles**

Regular school attendance is the most important factor in achievement at school and we are committed to helping every child achieve their full potential. Any absence from school disrupts a child's learning. Missing lessons damages a student's self-confidence and understanding. In addition, teachers who then have to slow down lessons to accommodate those who have missed previous sessions are not doing justice to the rest of the class who attended all the lessons.

We, at Imberhorne School, regard regular attendance to be 96% or higher, this equates to 8 school days of absence over the academic year. Excellent attendance improves students' outcomes and allows each child to fulfil their potential. When students' attendance fall below this, valuable learning time is lost or interrupted.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. 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 attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Present** – The student is on the school site at the time of registration.

**Approved Education Activity (AEA)** – The student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site for example, an educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

**Authorised absence (C,M,I)** – Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. This will include illness, medical appointments, bereavement or any other circumstances that the school deems appropriate. A request for medical evidence is made when a student falls below 91% attendance and is therefore classified as a Persistent Absentee.

**Excluded** – Excluded from school.

**Unauthorised absences (U)** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy
- absences which have never been properly explained

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time. Even though the latter is authorised, it will still be counted as an absence.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

The Government threshold for Persistent Absenteeism is 90% or lower. This includes all absence, whether as a result of genuine illness or for unauthorised reasons.

### **Imberhorne School Policy regarding Holidays in Term Time**

The DfES instructs schools to consider holidays in term time only in very exceptional circumstances. Almost all holidays taken during term time will be coded as unauthorised absences. There is no entitlement for parents to remove their child from school for a family holiday during term time, even in circumstances where the parents' employers refuse to grant holidays outside of the school term. The school is the only agency which can authorise such a holiday.

Parents who wish to claim exceptional circumstances as a reason for taking holidays in term time should be given the school's request form and return it to the Attendance Manager when possible at least 2 months before the holiday. A copy of our request form is available on the website.

### **Duties**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education. Parents/carers are responsible for their child's school attendance and punctuality. Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be

made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

**The school will ensure that:**

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Attendance targets are set for individual students and year groups.
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed.

**Students are expected to:**

- Attend school regularly and be registered punctually.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

**Parents/carers are expected to:**

- Ensure good attendance (96% and above)
- Inform the school on each day of absence and give specific reason.
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time (minimum of two weeks)

**Attendance procedures:**

- Parents/carers are asked to telephone school before 9am to notify us of a student's absence.
- Students who need to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter/email from their parents/carers.
- Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at the main reception and should sign out if leaving the premises before the end of the school day.
- Where parents/carers fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact them.

**Good attendance is valued at Imberhorne and we encourage this by:**

- Providing a happy, welcoming, and inclusive environment where students feel safe, and respected.
- Ensuring successful learning where students are engaged and feel supported.
- Promoting extra-curricular opportunities.
- Ensuring the accurate completion of registers at the beginning of each session and using lesson monitor within 10 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording attendance on student records.
- Recognising and rewarding outstanding attendance.
- Publishing and promoting attendance information (e.g. Contact, assemblies, reports to the Governing Body).
- Working in partnership with primary schools to identify and support students who have attendance problems in the feeder primary as part of liaison on transition between KS2 and KS3.
- Supporting those parents/carers who are concerned that their children may be having trouble in attending school.
- Sending parents/carers termly absence figures and engaging with them appropriately to support improved attendance, where necessary

- The efficient use of computerised registration systems to provide valuable, year group, form and student level attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the school
- Triggering more formal response with external agencies as appropriate

### **Form Tutors:**

- Have the responsibility of registering students' attendance at the beginning of the morning session.
- Encourage all students to have regular attendance by engaging in frequent reminders and sharing attendance data with their tutees.
- Ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations.
- Have conversations with students regarding absences.
- Have direct correspondence with parents regarding the students' wellbeing and attendance.
- Have a major role to play in encouraging students to be punctual and to attend school each day.
- Bring to the attention of the Head of Year those students who are either late for registration or who have been absent and there is a concern.

### **Teachers:**

- Take an electronic register each lesson within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson.
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons using 'on call' and the pastoral team.
- Use Bromcom to record any punctuality issues and pass any concerns to the mentor, Head of Year and Pastoral Team.
- If taking students off site, follow the protocol for recording attendance with the Attendance Officer and pastoral leaders.
- Inform the Attendance Officer by email and other staff of the students absent due to off-site activities.

### **Heads of Year:**

- Are responsible for monitoring attendance of their year group.
- Will liaise with Form Tutors in monitoring any attendance and punctuality concerns.
- Will liaise with the Attendance Officers when there are issues.
- Will meet with the Family Engagement Officer and Assistant Head fortnightly to discuss the attendance of their year group.
- Will meet with students to discuss attendance issues.
- Will contact parents/carers where there are concerns.
- Will hold attendance meetings with students and their parents/carers where there has been a period of time where the attendance has not improved despite any earlier intervention.

### **Attendance Officer:**

- Monitor the completion of registers by teaching and support staff.
- Will monitor attendance of the whole school.
- Will initiate contact with parents/carers if a student is absent.
- Are the first point of contact for parents/carers with regards to known absence.
- Will liaise with the Pupil Entitlement service regarding any referrals.

### **Family Engagement Officer:**

- Will support families where there are difficulties.
- Will liaise with outside agencies to support the family and improve attendance of the student.
- Will liaise with the Pupil Entitlement service regarding any referrals.
- Will make visits to the home where appropriate to support families.
- Will meet with students and their families to ensure a plan is made so that attendance improves.

### **Senior Assistant Headteacher:**

- Track and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies and systems as required. This will be achieved with the Senior Leadership Team and other members of the pastoral team.
- Track and monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups, passing such information the relevant members of staff.
- Support Heads of Year to lead their teams to foster regular attendance.
- Liaise with Attendance Manager regarding whole school attendance.

### **The Headteacher:**

- Monitor the policy and ensure the policy is adhered to.
- Ensure that attendance data is presented to the governing body and shared regularly with staff.
- Set attendance targets as part of the School Improvement Plan.

### **The Governing Body:**

- Approve attendance policy.
- Receive reports from the Headteacher.
- Scrutinise the working of the policy in light of the attendance data presented.
- Support the implementation of the policy.

### **Late Arrival**

Registration begins at 8.40am, and students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 8.55am and students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late.

Students arriving late without authorisation (a written explanation from parents/carers explaining the reason for the lateness, i.e. attending a medical appointment) more than three times per half term will receive a sanction from the school.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to reception to ensure that we can be responsible for them whilst they are in school. Students will then be provided with a late slip to bring to their class teacher confirming they have been officially signed in at school.

### **Using Attendance Data**

Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern. The Attendance Administrator/Manager will provide relevant teachers with regular attendance for each student within their form group/class, every student will be colour coded as indicated below:

**GREEN students with attendance 100% - 95%**

**AMBER - GREEN students with attendance 94 - 90%**

**RED students with attendance below 90%**

### **Unauthorised Absences**

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents/carers may not authorise any absence.

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- School has not given approval in advance for a student to be absent
- School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence
- Medical evidence requested by school is not forthcoming
- No explanation of absence is received within two weeks

Cases where parents/carers seem to condone unauthorised absence, school may involve the Pupil Entitlement service. The school will refer to the Pupil Entitlement service which may impose a Penalty Notice or start legal proceedings in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

### **Requests for absence**

- We do not authorise requests for absence except where there are exceptional circumstances.
- Parents/carers are required to complete an absence request form in advance of any planned absence clearly stating the circumstances that make the request exceptional. Ideally parents/carers need to allow at least two weeks for this paperwork to be processed. There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.
- 'Exceptional' means that the requested absence is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.
- Whether the absence is judged to be exceptional is at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation.