



## **Attendance Policy**

**Date reviewed: July 2024**

**Date to be reviewed: July 2025 (or as and when required)**

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### **1. Introduction and Aims**

Ivy House is a happy, supportive, and purposeful environment where pupils are nurtured, praised and acknowledged for who they are, the knowledge and skills they acquire and the tasks they accomplish.

Our pupils like to come to school. They are justifiably proud of what they achieve and enjoy celebrating not only their own successes but also those of their friends and other peers from across the school.

Families and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a high level of attendance for all children.

**Good school attendance is important, when children and young people are in school, they will:**

- Achieve
- Build confidence and self-esteem
- Develop new knowledge and skills
- Socialise with others
- Develop independence

## **Aims**

Our aim is to support families to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend regularly.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting and supporting punctuality

## **2. School procedures**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **9:20am** on each school day.

For security reasons the entrance doors will close at **9:45am**. Parents arriving after this time can use the intercom system located at the entrance to request access to the school.

The register for the first session will be taken at **9:35am** and will be kept open until **9:45am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1:30pm** and will be kept open until **1:45pm**.

### **Absence due to illness**

Families must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible.

Families can inform the school of their child's absence by telephone, there is an answerphone service which is open 24hr.

Families are expected to call each day unless the child is suffering from long-term illness.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask families to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and families will be notified of this in advance.

If your child is unwell whilst in school families will be contacted. We will also notify families if your child has three bouts of sickness or diarrhea (taking into consideration medical history and prescriptions, as well as individual knowledge of the child), as they will need to be collected as soon as possible and remain home for 48hrs.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Families are encouraged to make medical or dental appointments for their child outside of school time where possible. When this is not the case, families may be requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

School begins at **9.20 am** Monday to Friday. Pupils that arrive after **9.45am** will be considered as and marked as late using the appropriate code, unless there is a specific school transport issue.

Families are kindly requested to complete a late slip. This measure is in place to ensure accurate attendance records for the safety and well-being of our pupils.

Punctuality is crucial to maintaining a positive learning environment. Being late not only affects the latecomer's learning but can also disrupts the class and the learning of their peers. It's important to minimize lateness to ensure that every student can make the most of their educational experience.

### **Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason why, to ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

In the first instance families will receive a text message requesting families to contact school.

If no contact is made a telephone call will be made and follow up welfare calls following continued absence.

If the school cannot contact family via telephone by the third day of absence, home visits may be completed to ascertain the reason for absence.

If the school is unable to make contact with families joint enquires will be made in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) including contacting health, school admissions and children services.

### **Pupils with Complex Health Needs**

The school recognises that some pupils attending Ivy House School have complex medical needs which may on occasions prevent them attending school for frequent or prolonged periods of time.

Where a pupil is not able to attend school but is able to access educational activities within their home context, the school will:

- maintain regular contact with the home and family
- provide educational resources for the pupil at home as appropriate

## **Infection Control Measures and Health Protocols**

We will follow guidance from Public Health England in the event of a confirmed case of a contagious infection. Please note that due to GDPR privacy regulations, we are unable to inform families about common childhood illnesses, such as coughs and colds. We prioritise the health and safety of our school community by rigorously cleaning all areas daily. Additionally, we perform deep cleaning and utilise a chemical disinfectant fogging machine, which disperses an antiviral solution into hard-to-reach areas, ensuring a thorough sanitisation process when required.

## **3. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **Approval for term-time absence**

The law requires that the headteacher should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's families belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the families' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

To request term-time leave, families must complete the 'Request for Pupil Leave During Term Time' form, available from the school office. Upon receipt, the school will review the form and notify you of the decision regarding whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised.

### **Education Penalty Notices**

The Local Authority can fine families for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

A penalty notice offers a parent an alternative to prosecution. It requires the parents to pay an amount for their child's irregular attendance to avoid a court appearance. The fine is £120 per child, per parent to be paid within 28 days. If the fine is paid within 21 days, it will be reduced to £60 per child, per parent. If you choose not to pay the fine, the local authority may take legal proceedings against you.

### **3. Parental Engagement and Attendance**

#### **Reporting to Families:**

At Ivy House School, we prioritise transparent communication with families regarding their child's attendance. Families will receive updates on their child's attendance percentage both in the end-of-year report and on a termly basis.

Should a student's attendance percentage fall below 90% without exceptional reasons, families will be invited to participate in a collaborative discussion at the school. This dialogue aims to identify and address any underlying issues impacting their child's attendance, fostering a supportive partnership between families and the school.

#### **Support Initiatives to Promote Attendance:**

1. **Evidence for Learning App:** All families have access to our Evidence for Learning Application, empowering them to actively follow their child's educational journey.
2. **Inspire Sessions:** Families are warmly welcome to join our Inspire Sessions which take place throughout the year, where they can engage in enriching activities alongside their child. We believe this further strengthens families involvement in the school community.
3. **Attendance Lead Support:** Our dedicated attendance lead works closely with families to champion regular attendance. This support extends to assisting with transport applications, facilitating 'Return to School' meetings following hospital stays, aiding in smooth transitions, and collaborating with relevant agencies to address attendance challenges comprehensively.
4. **Family Events:** To cultivate a sense of belonging and encourage parental involvement, we regularly host family events, including Coffee Mornings, themed days, and various school events, providing opportunities for meaningful interaction and collaboration among families, students, and staff.

#### **Celebrating Individual Attendance**

We take great pride in recognising and celebrating our students' and family's commitment to attendance. To celebrate, we present individual awards that recognise good attendance, notable improvements in attendance, and commendable efforts towards maintaining attendance.

This recognition not only acknowledges the importance of regular attendance but also motivates and encourages all students and families to strive for their best possible attendance record, fostering a culture of punctuality and engagement within our school community.

## **Persistent Absence**

Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, the pupil is considered to be a persistent absentee. In these circumstances, the attendance level will be brought to the class teacher's attention. If the attendance rate remains below 90% into the next half term, the attendance lead will look to work with families to address any concerns and offer alternative levels of support.

## **Severe Absence**

Where a child's attendance falls below 50% without exceptional circumstances it is considered as severe absence. In these circumstances, a letter will be sent to the child's families outlining the current attendance figures and then a follow up phone call will be made by the attendance lead who will look to work with families to address any concerns the family may have.

This attendance level may also trigger a referral to Ivy House School's allocated Educational Welfare Officer within the Local Authorities' Educational Welfare Service through Derby City Council's Policy and Procedures.

# **5. Roles and responsibilities**

## **Academy Council**

The Academy Council is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis, it also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Academy Councilors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## **The Attendance Lead**

The Attendance Lead:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges meetings and calls with families to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Ensure all 'N' codes are changed daily to the relevant code, if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation)

## **Class Teachers**

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

## **Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from families about absence and record this on the school system.

If no reason for absence is obtained by 10am, a text message will be sent to families to request families to contact school and a follow up call if no contact is made.

## **6. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy was reviewed within a working group consisting of key stakeholders including families, staff, and the Vice Chair of the Academy Council.

It will be reviewed regularly by the Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Academy Council and ratified.

## **7. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding and Pupil Protection policy
- SET Attendance Procedures
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



## SECTION 8: ANNEX A

### **ANNEX A: Procedures regarding the failure of a parent/ carer to collect a child from school**

- If a child is not collected by a parent/carer after the school day or approved activity, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be notified. Every effort will then be made to contact the parent/carer, or failing that, the emergency contact.
  
- In the case of a pupil not being collected and no contact being made WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF THE USUAL COLLECTION TIME, the school will:
  - Contact the allocated social worker or a duty social worker at Derby First Contact to discuss the concerns and ask advice. This will allow the Social Care Team to be aware of the possibility that they may need to plan for the alternative care of the child.
  
  - Social Care will give advice and make appropriate checks. However, school will continue to be responsible for trying to contact the parent/carer/emergency contact and to keep Social Care updated about the situation.
  
  - If there are any concerns about the welfare of the parent/carer, Social Care may ask the local Police to visit the home address; please note that the Police cannot themselves provide a place of safety for a child(ren).
  
  - If attempts to contact a parent/carer are still unsuccessful, school and Social Care will jointly take responsibility for arranging for the child/ren to be transported to a place of safety.

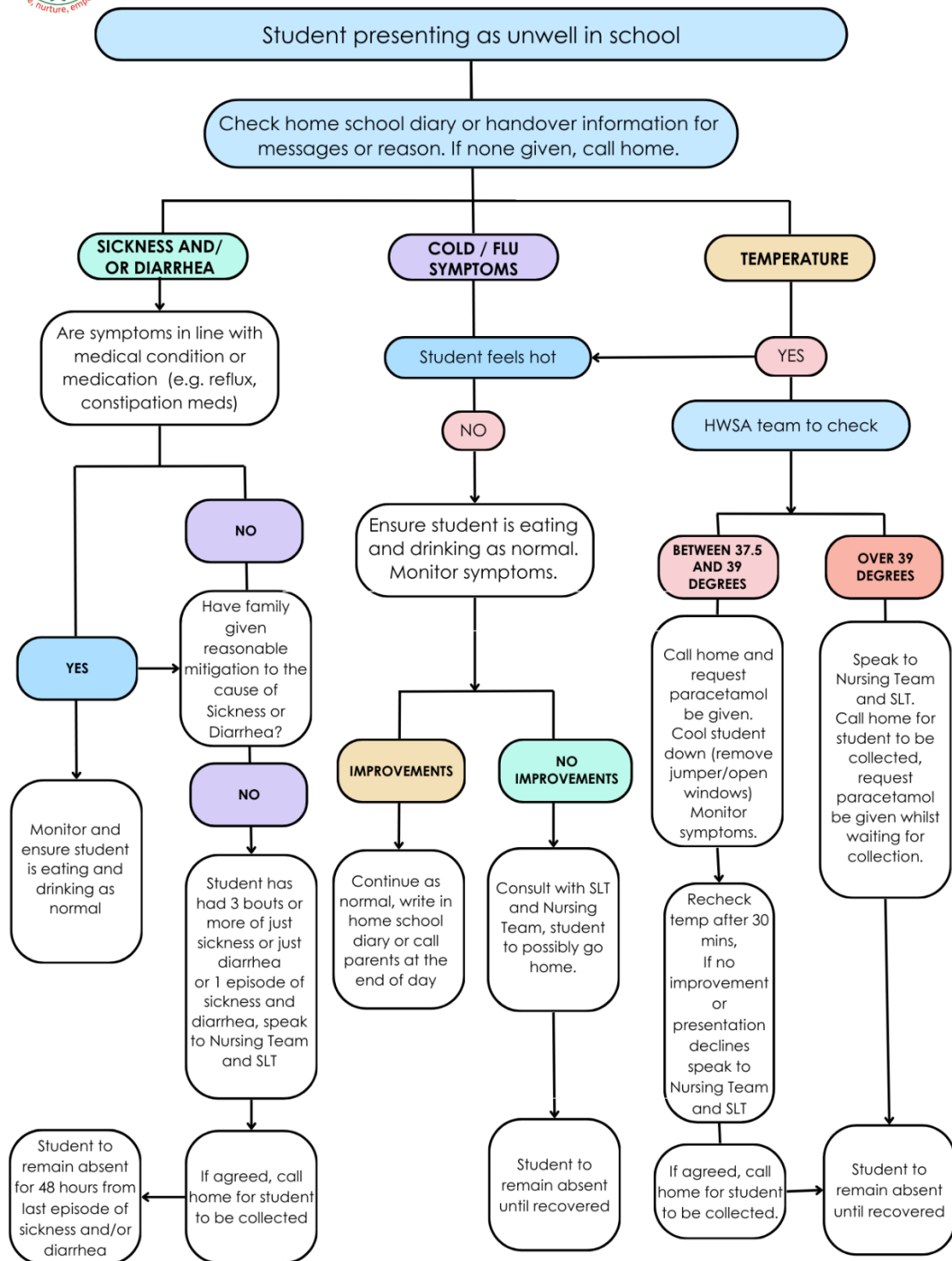
This is considered to be a last resort and families should do their best to ensure that this is not necessary.

Social Care will notify the school of the child's placement and provide contact details as appropriate. It will be the intention to return the child to the families at the earliest opportunity.

### **Useful Contacts**

- Derby Lighthouse fieldwork Team – 01332 256990
- Derby City First Contact (Children's social Care)– 01332 641172 (01332 956606 – After 5pm)
- Derbyshire Starting Point (Children's social Care)- 01629 533 190
- Staffordshire Childrens Advice and support Service (Children's social Care) – 0300 111 8007 (0345 604 2886 – After 5pm)

**SECTION 9: ANNEX B: Student Presenting as unwell flow chart**





**SECTION 9: ANNEX C: Request for Pupil Leave During Term Time**

**Request for Pupil Leave During Term Time**

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

My Child:			
For the period from(date):		To (date):	
The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are:			

Signature of Parent/Carer:	
Print Name:	

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised.

**For Office Use Only**


For Office use only			
Current Attendance:		Last Years Attendance:	
Number of sessions taken as leave during term time (this academic year):			

***Agreed / Not Agreed***

Request for leave is agreed/ is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed:		Print:	
Date:			

**SECTION 9: ANNEX D: Late Slip**

 <p>Working together to <b>inspire</b> <b>nurture</b> <b>empower</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Ivy House School – Late Slip – To be completed if arrival after 9.45am</u></b></p>	
Date:	Time of Arrival:
Dropped off by:	Relationship to student:
Student Name:	Class:
Reason for lateness:	