



## **ISSR Para 15a Junior School Attendance Policy**

*This policy is applicable to all pupils from Reception to Year 6 in the Junior School but not those in the Nursery whose attendance is not compulsory*

### **Overview**

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children. Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. We want all our pupils to be ready to learn. Arriving late or regular absence impacts on both a child's academic progress and their wellbeing.

### **Legal Requirements**

Parents / carers are responsible for making sure that their children, when of compulsory school age, receive a suitable full-time education. The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools follow up on absences to ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken and identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The Government expects parents / carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive at school on time

At school we promote good attendance and aim to reduce absence, particularly persistent absence, by meeting with families and offering a range of support either within school for the child, or reaching out to external agencies to support the family.

The school acknowledges that good attendance should be recognised and rewarded. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents / carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive the education to which they are entitled.

### **The School's Responsibility**

- Offer a safe, inclusive and supportive environment
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents / carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality
- Comply with legal requirements
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality is noted and monitored and appropriate action is taken

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- Keep parents / carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures
- Support Governors in taking an active role through sharing of information regarding attendance
- Work in partnership with parents / carers, medical teams, Early Help, Social Services and other outside agencies.

The school uses an online system for registration. The register is a legal document. The registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon. Registers are marked in the first 10 minutes of the start of the school day. Registers are submitted to the office before 9.00am. Prep School begins at 8.20am prompt and Pre-Prep at 8.30am. Pupils arriving after 8.50am will be marked with a late (L) mark.

### **Parents' responsibility**

Parents must let the school office know, either by email or telephone, before 9.00am on the first school day of their child's absence from school. Ideally, you should inform the school in advance should a child have a medical or dentist appointment. There will be times a child needs to be taken out of school unavoidably for a specific family or authorised event but we do very much discourage holidays during term time and they may be registered as unauthorised absences.

If the reason for absence is sickness and it continues – or is likely to continue for more than a week, medical evidence should be shared with the school. If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the office staff will phone the child's parent / carer. In the event that contact cannot be made, office staff will record this on the register. If there are any potential child welfare or safety concerns then the matter will be referred to the DSL who will decide on the next steps.

If a parent / carer does not inform the school, the office staff will ring the family home on the first day of absence or send an email to ascertain why the child is absent.

Parents must keep the school informed of any change of family address or contact details and ensure the school has a minimum of two emergency contact numbers.

### **Acceptable Levels of Attendance**

The school is aiming to achieve an attendance target of 95% for every pupil. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, or there is an identifiable pattern of absence, the Head of Junior School, DSL or SENDCo will initiate communication with the family. Persistent unauthorised absence does risk the right of the child to remain at our school as it is considered a breach of contract.

### **Authorised Absence**

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious observance
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours.

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- Special circumstances (authorised following a written request, made two weeks in advance, to the Head of the Junior School. The Head will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorised.)
- Permanent or fixed-term exclusions
- Field trips and educational visits including visiting other schools
- Sporting, artistic or musical activities.

### **Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences or absence which forms a concerning pattern or trend
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school.

### **Pupil Wellbeing**

We do know that at times some children suffer anxiety around leaving home and being at school. In these cases our Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead will liaise with the family and build support strategies which may involve colleagues across the school including the SENDCo, school counsellors and school nurses further supporting the child. In communication with parents, it may be appropriate to agree a reduced timetable, for example when a child is returning to school from ill health or a bereavement, these will be dealt with compassionately on an individual basis.

### **Escalation of Intervention**

1) The Head of Junior School or Deputy Head will review all absences and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 90% (the number will be analysed alongside national medical data, for example greater leniency was necessary during the pandemic). In most cases, the school will send a letter to the parents / carers informing them of their child's attendance and the school's concerns.

2) If at the end of the next half term a child's attendance level has not improved, without a clear, acceptable reason, the office staff will contact the parent / carer to arrange a meeting.

3) In the event that the child's attendance levels still do not improve, then the school will either visit the family home or refer the matter to the local authority access to education

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team. Any unauthorised absence for greater than ten days, where the family have not been in contact with the school, will be recorded with KCC as a Child Missing in Education. The Head of Junior School or one of the DSLs will inform the Governor in charge of Safeguarding about absences that are escalated to external authorities. Should a parent notify the school that they intend to home educate, the school has a responsibility to delete the child's name from the admission register and inform KCC.

### Monitoring this policy

The school Governors' Education and Welfare sub-committee is responsible for monitoring the impact of this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other JS policies include Child Protection and Safeguarding and the Parents' Handbook.

### Revision History

Version No.	Revision Date	Summary of change	Approved by	Updated by
1.1		New policy	PWG	ER
1.1	August 23	Reviewed – no changes		ER

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