

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1.1 Introduction

At ISCS, we are committed to working with parents to promote regular attendance and punctuality.

Our aim is for children to feel happy and secure in school and achieve their full potential. This is difficult to achieve if they are frequently absent from, or late for school. Children with poor attendance and punctuality not only miss doing their academic work but also miss out on the social side of school life, which can affect their ability to make and keep friendships. Consequently, we work hard to ensure that any problems with children's attendance are identified and followed up quickly; and that solutions are explored with parents at an early stage. We follow regulations and work closely with the authorities. Families are referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer if problems persist.

The school's policy is written in line with the local authorities' advice and procedures.

1.2 The legal framework

Parents are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education. They are responsible for ensuring that their children attend during the specified school hours and stay unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. It is also a parent's responsibility to inform the school of any absence.

ISCS is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the Local Authority. Under existing legislation, parents commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are unauthorised (absences without a valid reason). Only the school leaders can authorise absences.

1.3 Absence

Authorised Absence

The school leaders will only authorise absence from school for reasons believed to be unavoidable and/or exceptional. (NB Absence for educational reasons e.g. secondary school open days or alternative provision is recorded as such and counts as attendance.)

Acceptable reasons include:

- Child's illness, medical or dental appointments;
- Family bereavement;
- Days of religious observance (up to two in any academic year); and
- Other circumstances which the head of school believes to be reasonable e.g. attendance at family court.

Such absences will usually be authorised, if parents notify the school in good time and provide with the corresponding justification.

Unauthorised Absence

The School Head will not authorise absence from school for reasons he believes to be avoidable, e.g. family holidays during term time. Children may be removed from the school roll if parents take extended leave for family holidays, are regularly absent (belows 75%) or other unacceptable reasons.

Absences not normally authorised include:

- Holidays during term time;
- Weddings requiring travel abroad during term time;
- Visits to relatives;
- Relocation to foreign country visits during term time;
- Lateness where no adequate explanation is provided; and
- Absences which the school leaders believe to be non-essential or where no reason is provided.

Notifying the School of Reasons for Absence

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of any absence. They should state the nature of the absence and when the child is expected to return to school. Parents cannot demand that their children be granted authorised leave of absence from school, but they may request the evaluation of their case under exceptional circumstances.

- **Illness**

Parents should inform the school (school office and tutor) during the first day of absence and send a note, explaining the reason for the absence. The school must be also contacted if the absence is expected to exceed a week. Medical evidence may be required to authorise long term illness or periods of illness when a child's attendance has fallen.

- **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Please arrange these outside school hours, if possible. If appointments can only be arranged in the school day, parents should inform the school office and tutor about the absence and what time the child will return to school. Please send a copy of the appointment card/letter when provided.

- **Family Bereavement**

The school should be notified of the absence, either by telephone or ClickEdu, at the earliest opportunity.

- **Religious Observance**

The school should be notified in writing before the absence occurs. Please note that only two days (four half day sessions) will be authorised per academic year.

- **Other Circumstances**

Parents should write to the school (school office and tutor) requesting a leave of absence, explaining the circumstances, before the absence occurs. Term time leave can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Parents should inform the School at the earliest opportunity.

- **Punctuality**

Being on time to school is vital; arriving late is disruptive for your child, the teacher and other children in the class. If children are late for school, they should be brought to the School Reception Office, and their name recorded on ClickEdu, with the reason for the tardiness. This record is important as it enables the school to have a full record of attendance should there be a need for emergency evacuation or in case the authorities ask for those records. At the same time, if a student leaves school earlier than the end of the school day, he/she must also go through the School Reception Office to record this aspect in ClickEdu for the same aforementioned reasons.