



Inglehurst Infant School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Last Reviewed	November 2025
Review date	September 2026
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1 Introduction and Aims

At Inglehurst Infant School, we believe that good attendance is essential for every child's learning and future success. When children attend school regularly, they achieve more, build confidence, and develop important life skills.

We expect all children to be in school every day, unless they are genuinely unwell. This policy follows the government guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)*, which sets out how schools and families can work together to support children.

What the law says

- Every child must receive a full-time education from the term after their 5th birthday.
- Education should be suitable for their age, ability, and any special educational needs or disabilities.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make reasonable adjustments so that all children can access education.

Our commitment

- We will encourage and support families to help children attend regularly and on time.
- We will listen and work with parents/carers if attendance becomes difficult, offering help and adjustments where needed.
- We will act quickly if patterns of absence or lateness appear, so that problems don't grow.

- We will provide a safe and supportive environment where families feel understood, but we will also challenge poor attendance or punctuality when necessary.

2 Roles and responsibilities

Children

Children are expected to:

- Attend school every day and arrive on time.
 - Morning registration: 8:30 (Nursery), 8:40 (Reception & KS1).
 - Afternoon registration: 12:00 (Nursery), 12:30 (Reception), 12:45 (Year 1), 13:00 (Year 2).
 - Arriving late = marked as **L** (late). More than 20 minutes late = **U** (unauthorised absence).
- Come to school ready to learn, with the right equipment.
- Speak to a member of staff if something is stopping them from coming to school.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a **legal duty** under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to make sure their child attends school regularly. This means:

- Ensuring their child attends on time, dressed appropriately, and ready to learn.
- Informing school by phone or email **every morning** their child is absent.
 - The school will decide if the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
 - If no reason is given, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Providing medical evidence if requested (appointment card, letter/email, prescription, photo of prescribed medication).
- Understanding that holidays during term time will not be authorised.
- Booking medical, dental, or optician appointments outside school hours whenever possible.
- Updating school about any medical conditions or diagnoses that may affect attendance.
- Giving school up-to-date contact details, including at least two emergency contacts.
- Collecting their child on time at the end of the school day.

Inglehurst Infant School

The school will:

- Provide a welcoming, caring environment where children want to learn and families feel supported.
- Promote the importance of attendance in our ethos and policies.
- Monitor attendance data regularly and challenge poor attendance.
- Support families with clear expectations and encouragement to help children attend.
- Contact families by phone, text, email, or letter if attendance is a concern, and arrange meetings to discuss support.

- Work with families to find strategies that improve attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise children with attendance below 90% as **persistently absent** (below 50% = **severely absent**) and treat them as vulnerable.
- Monitor the impact of attendance strategies.
- Issue fixed penalty notices if necessary.
- Work with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies to tackle persistent absence.
- Charge for late collection in line with our Charging Policy.
- Support families who choose elective home education (EHE), though we do not recommend it.

Illness and Additional Support

- If a child has a severe or long-term illness, school may send work home (if advised by a health professional).
- In some cases, referral to the Children's Hospital School may be appropriate.
- We recognise that good attendance supports children's emotional and mental health.
- We will make reasonable adjustments for children experiencing attendance difficulties due to social, emotional, or mental health issues, especially where they are receiving clinical treatment.
- More information is available on our website: *Mental health and wellbeing – a graduated approach*.

3 Contacts

The school's Senior Attendance Champion is Ms Pochin and the attendance officer is Mrs Parker, both can be contacted by telephone on 0116 262 2479 or email office@inglehurst-inf.leicester.sch.uk

4 Attendance Register

- By law, schools 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 morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session.
- The register will be marked in accordance with the DfE attendance codes, which can be found on page 10 of this document.
- Any amendments will include the date and name of the person making the amendment along with a reason.
- Every entry will be kept for a three-year period in accordance with statutory guidance.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

Everyday Attendance

- Children are expected to attend school every day.
- Minor illnesses (such as coughs, colds, or a temperature below 38°C) are not usually a reason to stay at home.

- If your child is too unwell to attend, they should return as soon as possible.
- School staff can administer medicine to help children return sooner — please ask at the school office or see our *Managing Medicines and Healthcare Needs in School Policy*.

Requesting Leave During Term Time

- Leave of absence can only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.
- Requests must be made in writing at least **5 working days before** the planned absence.
- Each request is considered individually, and school may ask for extra information or evidence.
- You will be notified in writing or by email of the decision.
- Holidays or leisure trips are **not considered exceptional circumstances** by the Department for Education (DfE).

If you take your child out of school after being told the absence is unauthorised, the Local Authority may issue a **Penalty Notice** or begin court proceedings (see Section 7: Legal Sanctions).

Authorised Absence Examples

Absence may be authorised for:

- Illness (medical evidence may be requested).
- Hospital appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours (with proof of appointment).
- Religious observance (limited to one day per academic year, applied for in writing).
- Exceptional circumstances agreed by school.
- External exams (with confirmation letter).
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes (agreed with school).

Unauthorised Absence Examples

Absence will **not** be authorised for:

- Holidays during term time.
- Shopping trips, haircuts, or family days out.
- Birthdays or being tired.
- Weddings or absences linked to working patterns.
- Any unexplained absence.

6 Lateness

Being on time is very important. Arriving late can:

- Mean your child misses key messages and the start of learning.
- Make children feel uncomfortable walking into class after everyone else.
- Distract other pupils who are already settled and ready to learn.

What happens if your child is late

- If your child arrives **after registration**, they will be marked as on site but not present.
- This counts as an **unauthorised absence**.
- Persistent lateness can lead to a **Penalty Notice fine** or, in serious cases, prosecution by the Local Authority.

7 Legal sanctions

By law, parents are responsible for making sure their child attends school regularly. If a child of compulsory school age has unauthorised absences, the school or Local Authority can issue fines or begin court proceedings.

Penalty Notice Fines (from 19 August 2024)

- **When fines are issued**
 - For 5 or more consecutive days of unauthorised absence.
 - For repeated shorter absences (10 sessions = 5 days in a 10-week period).
 - Each parent can be fined for each child.
- **First offence**
 - £160 per parent per child (within 28 days).
 - Reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- **Second offence (within 3 years)**
 - £160 per parent per child (within 28 days).
 - No reduced option.
- **Third offence**
 - No Penalty Notice.
 - Case goes straight to Magistrates' Court.
 - Fines can be up to £2,500 per parent per child.
 - A conviction may appear on a parent's DBS certificate, which can affect job applications and travel abroad.

Serious Cases

- If the Local Authority believes a Penalty Notice is not enough, they can take prosecution action sooner.

8 Strategies for promoting attendance

Celebrating Good Attendance

We want children to feel proud of coming to school every day. That's why we celebrate attendance regularly:

- **Half-term awards** for children who improve their attendance.

- **Weekly certificates** for the class with the highest attendance in each phase (EYFS and KS1). These are shared in assembly and celebrated with parents on our communication app *Reach More Parents*.
- **Weekly stickers** for children with 100% attendance.
- **Gold stickers** at the end of each half term for children with 100% attendance.
- **Certificates at the end of the year** for children who achieve 100% attendance all year.
- **Individual incentives** may be offered if a child's attendance is a concern.

How We Support and Encourage better attendance

To make sure every child gets the best from school, we:

- Send reminders about attendance and punctuality through our communication app.
- Contact families with letters, texts, or emails if attendance becomes irregular or low.
- Ask for evidence (such as medical notes) to authorise absences.
- Talk with children and parents/carers to understand any issues affecting attendance.
- Put strategies in place and, if needed, refer families to Early Help or other support services.
- Discuss attendance at parents' evenings and include it in end-of-year reports.
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer.
- Use statutory interventions or prosecution if other actions fail, to protect a child's right to education.
- Review our processes regularly to check they are effective.
- Record attendance conversations on CPOMS (our safeguarding system).
- Monitor attendance data every half term, term, and year — for the whole school and for individual pupils.
- Identify groups of children whose absences may be a concern and provide targeted support.
- Analyse patterns of attendance and absence to develop strategies that address them.
- Share regular attendance reports with staff and leaders to support discussions with families.
- Use data to evaluate the impact of interventions and adjust strategies as needed.

9 Attendance monitoring

We check attendance every day to make sure all children are safe and learning. If a child is absent and we haven't heard from parents/carers, we take the following steps:

What happens if your child is absent without explanation?

- **Day 1:** We will call or text you to ask why your child is not in school.
- We may ask for evidence (such as a medical note) to decide if the absence can be authorised.
- If your child is absent for more than 3 days, we will ask for medical evidence.
- If we cannot reach you or your emergency contacts, the school, Education Welfare Service, or police may visit your home to check that your family is safe and well.
- If concerns remain, we may refer to Social Care, Education Welfare, or the police.

- If we are worried about a child's safety, we will report this to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy if they are unavailable).

Our Attendance Target

- We aim for **96% attendance** across the school.
- If your child's attendance falls below this, shows a regular pattern of absence, or includes unauthorised absences, we may ask for medical evidence to authorise future absences.
- We will talk with families and put strategies in place to support attendance.
- Where needed, we will refer families to wider services to help remove barriers to attendance.

When concerns continue

- If attendance does not improve and there are repeated unauthorised absences, the Education Welfare Service may hold an **Attendance Panel meeting** with the school and family to agree ways forward.

Key Definitions

- **Persistent absence:** Missing 10% or more of school.
- **Severe absence:** Missing 50% or more of school. Children in these groups miss a significant amount of education and will always be closely monitored, with a plan in place to support improvement.

Nursery Attendance

If a child in Nursery has poor attendance and does not improve quickly, their place may be withdrawn so another child can benefit.

How data is used

- We collect pupil-level absence data each term.
- This is published nationally and locally by the Department for Education (DfE).
- We compare our school's attendance to the national average and share this with our governing board.

10 Child Missing In Education (CME)

Any child considered to be missing in education will be reported to the Education Welfare Service for assistance. Children missing education (CME) is defined as **those who are of a compulsory school age, but are either not registered at a school or else not receiving suitable education in place of a school setting**. CME may be at a significant risk of: not meeting their academic potential and underachieving.

11 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once every academic year by Mrs Parker, Attendance, Welfare and Child Protection Officer. At every review, the head teacher and the governing body will approve the policy.

12 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND
- Charging Policy
- Equality
- Data Protection
- Managing medicine and healthcare needs in school policy

13 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Attendance Session Codes from 19/08/2024

Present	
/\	Present (AM,PM)
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
Approved Education Activity	
B	Attending any other approved educational activity (changed definition from 19/08/2024)
K	Attending education provision arranged by local authority (new from 19/08/2024)
P	Participating in a sporting activity
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
Authorised absence	
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance (changed definition from 19/08/2024)
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (new from 19/08/2024)
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (new from 19/08/2024)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (new from 19/08/2024)
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Not counted in possible attendances	
D	Dual registered at another school (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements (new from 19/08/2024)
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available (new from 19/08/2024)
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel (new from 19/08/2024)
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed (new from 19/08/2024)
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed (new from 19/08/2024)
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention (new from 19/08/2024)
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law (new from 19/08/2024)
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause (new from 19/08/2024)
Z	Pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure (changed definition from 19/08/2024)

- NOTES:**
- 1) New codes (from 19/08/24) appear in **RED**.
 - 2) Codes with changed definitions (from 19/08/24) appear in **BLUE**.
 - 3) Codes **H** (Holiday authorised by the school), **J** (Interview) and **Y** (Unable to attend – exceptional circumstances) **not used** from 19/08/24.

Penalty Notice Fines for School Absence

Fines are issued in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

This poster explains when a fine can be issued for unauthorised absence that occurs from August 2025 onwards. Fines issued for absence that happened from August 2024 onwards count towards the escalation process.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in **each** parent receiving 3 **separate** fines.

Consecutive days of term time leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for:

- term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days
- or 4 days where the absence immediately precedes/includes a 5th day which is a school closure day (e.g. school holiday / INSET / enforced closure) or any form of absence
- or for fewer days where this has happened before

10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days. (No option to pay at £80 level)

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will usually proceed to the Magistrates' court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate and may impact on **job applications and travel abroad**.

Court prosecutions: Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued. Parents are advised that where the LA considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken.

By law, all Penalty Notice payments go to the local authority and not to schools.