

# Impington Village College Attendance Strategy

This strategy applies to all students of compulsory school age at Impington Village College and will be used to inform attendance practice in relation to the Impington International Sixth Form.

## Key Principles

- Students at Impington Village College have the right to the best possible education.
- In order for students to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- Students' ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution may be jeopardised by poor attendance.

## Context

Impington Village College endeavours to provide a safe learning environment in which students can enjoy and achieve. We acknowledge the proven correlation between high level attendance and student outcomes. Impington Village College's attendance strategy emphasises positive strategies and a range of interventions to ensure the highest levels of attendance. However, when normal College procedures do not result in good attendance, a range of further measures, including legal action, have to be considered.

## Impington Village College aims to

- emphasise the importance, to all students, of maximum attendance at college as an essential pre-requisite for making full use of all educational opportunities and to maximise individual achievement;
- make explicit to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers and students) the College's expectations on attendance levels;
- promote a consistent approach across the College towards all matters relating to attendance;
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- communicate to all relevant parties the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

## Requirements/ Legal Responsibilities

It is a legal requirement that students of compulsory school age receive a full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance leads to students missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential; it also places children at risk and may result in their being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

**Therefore we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our students**

## What is an acceptable attendance rate?

Attendance is a national priority, national data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high achievement and examination performance. In addition, all schools must submit data electronically every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by OFSTED.

**Impington Village College expect attendance at college to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence**

**The simple facts:** Students attend school for **190** days each year

- At **96%** attendance **73%** of students achieve **5 A\*-C** GCSE including English and Maths but even at 96% a student would have missed **45 lessons**
- **17** days off school every year means that a student will probably obtain a whole grade lower in each exam than they are really capable of
- **19 days** off per school year means that a student has approximately **90%** attendance. At 90 % attendance you will have missed **95 lessons** in one year. 90% attendance throughout a student's secondary education is **half a year absent**
- At **80%** attendance a student will have missed **38 days** of school. This means that a student will probably be underachieving by two whole grades in each subject, only **35%** of those with attendance between 80-90% **will achieve 5 A\*-C** at GCSE including English and Maths.

Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period; what we look for are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the student is marked present on all ten sessions); students should **not** have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the College.

## **Authorised Absences**

The College cannot legally authorise **any** leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for **authorised** or **justified** absences:

- a child is ill or receiving medical attention;
- days of religious observance, notified in advance;
- absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as **approved sporting activities** that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school; professional discretion will need to be used in these cases as to whether the absence can be authorised.

If exceptional circumstances are being applied for an **Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances form** (see appendix 1) is to be completed and submitted to the Principal for approval at least **two weeks** prior to the absence.

*Forms are available on the IVC website and from the Attendance Administrator or House teams.*

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; **routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.**

## **Unauthorised Absences**

These are absences where:

- no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carer(s);
- the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of **authorised** absence above.

DFE guidelines state that the following activities would be classified as **unauthorised**;

- minding the house;
- caring for relatives;
- awaiting repair people;
- shopping;
- a birthday or family celebration.

There are clearly some grey areas. The DFE guidelines look at the area of Special Occasions and make clear that only truly exceptional occasions should be classified as authorised; for example, absence resulting from a student attending the wedding of a parent could be counted as authorised; a birthday treat to a theme park would not.

## Holidays during Term time

In line with Government guidelines, where parents/carers are discouraged from taking students out of College during term time, the Principal may not grant absence for any reason unless there are exceptional circumstances. If exceptional circumstances are being applied for an **Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances form** (see appendix 1) is to be completed and submitted to the Principal for approval at least **two weeks** prior to the absence. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in a Penalty Notice of £60, for each parent, for those who pay within 21 days and £120 for those who pay within 28 days.

*Forms are available on the IVC website and from the IVC Attendance Administrator or House teams.*

## Persistent Lateness to College

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's education, we would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this.

## Home/IVC Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the College and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents to:

- do all you can to ensure their child arrives **on time** for morning and afternoon college sessions; morning registration begins at 9:00am and afternoon registration is at 2:35pm. We will monitor persistent late comers and action will be taken; **parents can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late;**
- if your child is ill, notify the school **on the each day** of absence.
- get in touch at an early stage about any concerns you have about their child's attitude towards College.

### In return Impington Village College will:

- contact home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home;
- contact home over any unexplained absences;
- follow up promptly any concerns parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in College;
- involve the House team or Personalised Learning Department to help students re-integrate into College after illness or other individual circumstances;
- regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- reward excellent or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

## Rewards for Good Attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance Impington Village College offers the following rewards:

- Merits for weekly 100% attendance
- Celebration in Tutor Time and House Assemblies
- An Attendance Cup is awarded to the House with the highest attendance each term

- An Attendance Shield is presented to the House with the highest attendance for the academic year each July
- Letters from the Principal for long term exceptional attendance and overcoming long term non-attendance will become part of the student's records and make a meaningful contribution to their reference for further education or the world of work. Impington International Sixth Form, prospective employers, Sixth Form Colleges and Colleges of Further Education view attendance and punctuality as important indicators of motivation/attitude and our records and references are very valuable evidence of reliability. **The majority of Cambridgeshire Sixth Form providers expect at least 96% attendance when offering places.**

## Roles and responsibilities

High attendance levels are achieved as a result of staff working closely together and knowing where their responsibilities lie. The outline of respective roles of the Form Tutor, House Manager, Attendance Administrator, Head of Personalised Learning and the College procedures are explained in appendix 2i.

## Education Welfare

Education Welfare is a statutory service and a legal requirement. Education Welfare involvement is triggered by an unacceptable level of:

- Unauthorised absence
- Persistent absence
- Lateness

At Impington Village College the Head of Personalised Learning is the Attendance Officer and specifically targets the students whose attendance falls below 90% working with the Attendance Administrator and House Teams. The Head of Personalised Learning is responsible for ensuring that Impington Village College's strategy and practice is compliant with the local authority's legal duties and processes. This includes ensuring that only the Principal authorises legal action.

## Legal action

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends Impington Village College on a regular and punctual basis. Should any student's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to an Education Welfare investigation. Where necessary the Head of Personalised Learning will recommend legal action. Impington Village College and Cambridgeshire Local Authority work together in partnership where legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- **Penalty Notice:** A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 28 day period, a prosecution will be sought.
- **Prosecution for unauthorised absence:** It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered student at Impington Village College. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

## **A Final Word**

We feel attendance levels are an indicator of how effective and caring a school is. Failure to attend can be an indication that all is not well at home so that there is a welfare aspect to attendance as well. Equally, it is clear that regular, consistent attendance is an essential pre-requisite for effective learning.

We take attendance seriously and have put a lot of time and energy into getting our procedures as efficient and effective as possible. We urge you to give this matter the priority it deserves.



**ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only) *appendix 1***

To: *The Principal of Impington Village College*

*I wish to apply to have an 'unavoidable' absence authorised, for:*

Child's name ..... Year ..... Form .....

Date from ..... date to .....(inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s): .....

Address: .....

.....

**Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.**

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

.....

Office use only			<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised      Code ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance	
			Signed _____ Principal

✂-----

**This portion to be returned to parents/carers**

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Student(s) name(s).....

Form/Year.....

Absence authorised      from .....to ..... (Inclusive)

Absence unauthorised current attendance ..... % as of ...../...../20.....

Signed .....(Principal)

Date.....

## NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

*appendix 1*

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission **must** be sought in **advance**. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactory up to the date covered by this request.

**Warning:** If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

### AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**WARNING:** If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>School aged pupils in maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides</p>
<p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

**appendix 1**

<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Genuine illness</li><li>▪ Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)</li><li>▪ Days of religious observance</li><li>▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li><li>▪ External examinations</li><li>▪ When Traveller children go on the road with their parents</li></ul>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Any type of shopping</li><li>▪ Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li><li>▪ Minding the house</li><li>▪ Birthdays</li><li>▪ Resting after a late night</li><li>▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li></ul>
<p>Please contact your child's head teacher if you wish to discuss this issue.</p> <p><b>The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.</b></p> <p>We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	

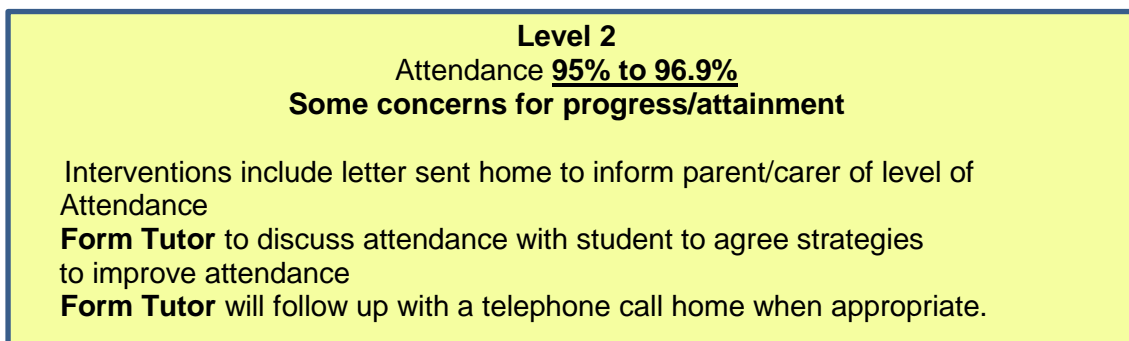
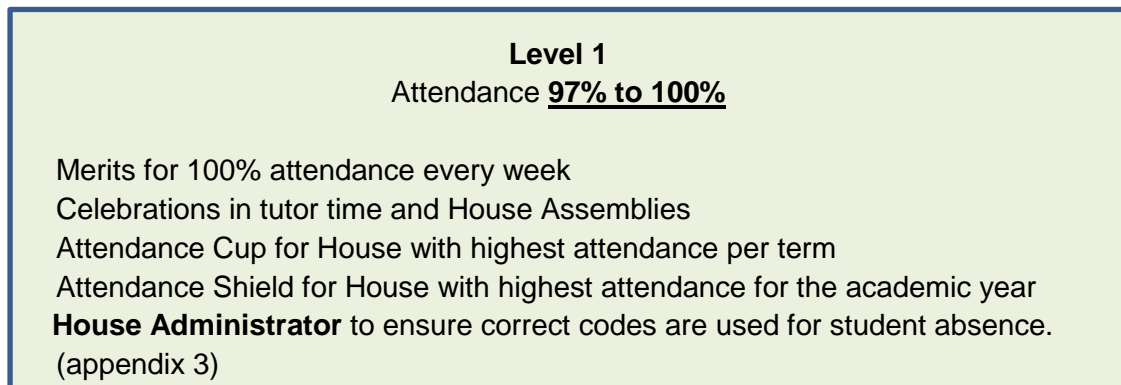
\*Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days



## **Impington Village College Attendance Procedures for parents/carers** *appendix 2i*

Improving attendance is a whole college initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, students and all members of college staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole college approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. This is led by the Head of Personalised Learning who works with the House Teams to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole college level.



**Level 3**

Attendance 92% to 94.9%  
**Risk of under achievement**

Interventions include letter sent home to inform parent/carer of level of attendance and offering a meeting with the parents/carer and House Manager to discuss support available to parent/carer(s) and student

Further absence may not be authorised without medical evidence from GP/Hospital/Dentist (parents are informed of this in the letter)

**Form Tutor** to meet student to discuss strategies for improvement, positive interventions may be put in place if appropriate and locality support will be offered  
Information can be found at

[Parenting & family support - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)



**Level 4**

Attendance 90% to 91.9%  
**Persistent Absence**  
**Severe risk of under achievement**

Interventions include Letter sent home to inform parent/carer(s) of level of attendance

**Members of House Teams** available to meet with parent/carer(s) to discuss strategies and interventions

Support is available from the college and from the locality, if appropriate, information can be found at

[Parenting & family support - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

If attendance continues to drop to below 90% Penalty notices may be issued, further information at

[Non-attendance and the law - Education: your rights and responsibilities - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)



**Level 5**  
Attendance **below 90%**  
**Persistent Absence**  
**Extreme concern**

Interventions may include penalty notices and legal action, further information can be found at [Non-attendance and the law - Education: your rights and responsibilities - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Parent/carer(s) maybe called to a Parent Contract Meeting with the **Head of Personalised Learning** to agree targets to improve student's attendance

If attendance continues to fall the Head of Personalised will refer to the Local Authority for Penalty Notices to be issued or to an Educational Welfare Officer, appointed by the Local Authority, for a PACE interview to be arranged, this is held under caution.

Impington Village College will ensure that it continues to work with and support the student and their parent/carer(s) to ensure that the student's attendance rises to the expected level

Locality support will be offered if appropriate, information can be found at

[Parenting & family support - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

If you would like to discuss any issues around your child's attendance please contact their **Form Tutor in the first instance**. Your child's House Team and the Head of Personalised Learning are also available.

**Absence Codes – Recorded on registers**

A	Present at registration
B	Educated Off Site (Not dual registered)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
F	Agreed extended holiday
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H	Agreed holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
K	Exam
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P	Approved sporting activity
Q	Absent from class, working elsewhere
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not based working)
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to pupils
AEA	Authorised Educational Activity - counted as present.

The Absence Codes have been updated by Capita and are now identical for all schools nationally