

*Training for this life...*



*And the Hereafter.*

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Summary**

This policy sets out the school's expectations and procedures in respect of encouraging its' pupils to attain the best attendance possible

**Next Review date: October 2023**

## Iqra Attendance Policy

### **Statement of Intent**

Iqra VA Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. More than ever we realise that regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

Furthermore, our attendance policy and procedures are an integral part of our safeguarding duty of care, helping to ensure that our pupils are safeguarded against abuse, neglect and prevents the risk of them becoming 'missing from education'.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Iqra VA Primary School.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school daily regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent by 8.45am. Failure to do so, could escalate into a safeguarding issue, it is paramount that all parties know that your child is safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive and be in the classroom by 8:30 am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the main doors leading into the school office area, where the reason for lateness is recorded by designated staff members.

### **The Role of the School Staff**

Sister Najma Khamboo has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Attendance Officer who in turn notifies the Headteacher of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Sister Najma Khamboo to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone and then text
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed of child's attendance figure every half term.

## **Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance**

- 98 - 100% attendance - expected level of attendance
- 96%-97% good attendance no action required unless there are any reasons for concern
- 94% - 95% is satisfactory attendance no action required unless there are any reasons for concern
- 90%-93% unsatisfactory attendance – class teacher and welfare Officer monitor, potentially further monitored through attendance meetings with EWO, school intervention letters / meetings with parents
- Below 89% - consideration given to referral to the Attendance Service or Penalty Notice referral where the absences have not been authorised and referral criteria are met.

Please refer to Appendix 8 for guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral.

## **Children leaving our school, including those moving abroad or to home education**

Where a parent informs us that their child will be leaving the school there are 3 usual instances; they are either transferring schools, becoming home educated or moving abroad. In each case, the following procedures apply:

1. Transferring schools: parents are requested to fill in a transfer form, additionally to put it in writing, our admin team will then phone the named receiving school to check that the application has been made and will further re-phone when they have begun at their new school to double check their attendance. Finally, our admin team will complete a 'roll amendment notification form' - which is sent to our LA.
2. Becoming Home educated; parents are asked to put the request in writing, the school will then contact our EWO, followed by contacting the home education department of the child's residence. Finally, our admin team will complete a 'roll amendment notification form' - which is sent to our LA.
3. Where a child is moving abroad, the parent is requested to put this in writing, accompanied with confirmation of their travel documents. Parents are requested to let us know which school abroad the child will be attending and their new address. If we do not have any of the required information the EWO will be notified and the EWO will conduct a home visit (after 10 consecutive days). If the child is absent for 10 consecutive days a MARF must be completed and sent to the LA. Their place is held on roll for a further 20 days. Finally, our admin team will complete a 'roll amendment notification form' - which is sent to our LA.

### **4. EWO Contact details (Lambeth)**

EWO Sophia Hall (tel: 0207 926 9615)

## **Children Missing Education**

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Attendance Service and only then if they have been absent for 20 consecutive days.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. We will follow the IQRA Primary School procedures for unauthorised absence, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

It is essential that staff are alert to signs to look out for and individual triggers to be aware of, when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.

The school will inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be removed from the admission register where the pupil:

- has been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- has been permanently excluded.

The local authority will be notified when a pupil is removed from the register for any of the five reasons above. The school will comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education and follow up any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between Iqra Primary School and the local authority.

**IQRA Primary School HAS A DUTY TO INFORM THE LA OF ANY ADDITIONS TO THE IQRA PRIMARY School ROLL THAT DO NOT FORM PART OF INITIAL PRIMARY ENTRY OR SECONDARY TRANSFER.**

### **Lateness**

At Iqra VA Primary School the register is taken at 8:30 am and 1:25 pm. All pupils that arrive late (after 8:30 am) must report, with their parent to the main doors leading into the school office area, where the reason for lateness is recorded by designated staff members. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 8:40 am and 1:35 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. This means, for example, that if a child arrives at school at 8.41am, they will be marked as absent ('U') for the WHOLE morning (1 session).

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents regularly and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). It can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness & Attendance**

- 10 incidents of unauthorised absence including arrival after the registers have closed in a term may lead to a referral to the Attendance Service (AS) for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter

- Once the Penalty Notice Warning Letter is issued, parents must ensure that no unauthorised absence is recorded in the following 15 school days
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, AS may instigate court proceedings
- Please note that living a distance away from the school is ultimately not an acceptable reason to fail to ensure a child's regular and punctual attendance. If distance becomes a significant issue, the school and the EWO will advise a parent that the school may not be an appropriate one for their child, since their primary responsibility is to ensure that they attend regularly and punctually.

### **Authorising Absence**

It is the duty of the parent to inform the school on the first day of absence before 8.45am. Messages may be left on the school's answering machine. Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Head Teacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will NOT be authorised:

- Persistent non specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

### **Attendance and Lateness**

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

#### **Five Steps'**

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils.
2. Discussion with EWO or Attendance Service Staff to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff
4. Initiate a Common Assessment (CAF)
5. Referral to Attendance Service

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school.

## Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence in a term (Autumn/Spring/Summer) the school will consider the following:

## Education Welfare Officer Actions

This may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

## Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.**
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be **£120** to be paid within 28 days, reduced to **£60** if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the LA to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

**Exceptional Circumstances** - Family holidays, for whatever reason, cannot be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause e.g. a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

Requests for holidays in term time will not be authorised.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

#### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Leave**

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.
- AS receives a request to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of 10 or more school sessions (5 days)
- AS issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
- If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 28 days of issue, AS may instigate court proceedings

**Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)**

**Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)**

**Appendix 3 Absence Letter**

**Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter**

**Appendix 5 Penalty Notice information**

**Appendix 6 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral**

**Appendix 7 Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)**

**Appendix 8 School Based Intervention Flow Chart**