



PUPIL ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND SICKNESS POLICY

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1 OVERVIEW

- 1.1 This Policy replaces the Attendance Policy issued June 2016
- 1.2 Attendance at School is a legal requirement for pupils between the ages of 5 and 18. Young people re entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives.
- 1.3 All pupils attending The Island Project (“the School”) are more vulnerable and have greater needs than their mainstream counterparts. This means that they may have more genuine absences from School for medical reasons, or they may experience greater social needs or anxieties than others. It is our responsibility as educators to do all we can to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance.
- 1.4 In this policy, the term “School” refers to both the school site at Diddington Lane and the college site at Birmingham Road. Any differences in policy or procedure between the two sites will be highlighted by reference to the relevant site.
- 1.5 Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend School. The School is committed to ensuring that families understand how important this is. We give high priority to supporting parents and pupils on the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home and school links. The School utilises a number of communication links to support this including home-school diaries, Parentmail and direct contact with Unit Heads, Head of School or Head of Further Education.
- 1.6 If there are problems which affect a pupil’s attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and the relevant Local Authority to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 1.7 Following the sad death of a 4 year old boy with autism in October 2016, new guidance has been issued following a report by the Coroner to the Education Secretary. The report recommends that :
 - (a) Schools should hold at least three different numbers for different adults;
 - (b) Schools should immediately send a member of staff to the home when contact cannot be made by phone with the parent of an unexpectedly absent child; and
 - (c) If there is no answer when staff visit the home, the police should be called immediately.
- 1.8 As a School, we obviously take the welfare of our pupils and their families seriously, and are keen to follow best practice at all times.

2 PROCEDURES

- 2.1 The Register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupil’s attendance or absence and in the latter case, if authorised or unauthorised.
- 2.2 **Registration**
 - (a) At the School (including both sites at Diddington Hall and Birmingham Road), a manual registration system is used to register pupils.
 - (b) Manual Registers just be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary, this must clearly be identified showing both the original entry and the change and should be initialled by the Unit Head.
 - (c) Registers are returned to the Office at Diddington Hall, or the Head of Further Education Birmingham Road at the end of the registration period.
 - (d) Copies of the Registers from Birmingham Road are sent across to the School Office at Diddington on a weekly basis.
 - (e) The information is then entered into the School’s information management

system to allow relevant reporting to Local Authorities as and when required.

- (f) The morning register closes at 10. All pupil arrivals after this point are treated as absent from that session, unless the School has already authorised late arrival, or the pupil has a different and specific agreed start time.

2.3 Absences and lateness

- (a) Absences are regarded as unauthorised if no satisfactory explanation is given in a note or by telephone by the parents or carers.
- (b) Parents or carers dropping pupils off late must report to the School Office or Head of Unit and should explain the reasons for lateness. This will be recorded with the time of arrival.
- (c) It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to contact the School on the first morning of the pupil's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the answer phone or phoning when the School office opens at 8.30am (in the case of College, at 8am). All Unit Heads have school phones for the purposes of parent contact.
- (d) In any event, a parent or carer should contact the School prior to 9.30 am. If this contact is not made, the School will contact the parent/carer by telephone or, if the parent is unobtainable, a text message may be sent.
- (e) If the action outlined in paragraph (d) fails to provide an explanation for absence, the Head of School or Head of Further Education will attempt to get in touch and a letter may be sent to the parents/carers. The parent/carer will be invited into the School for a meeting with the Head of School, Head of Further Education, and/or School Principal and/or responsible BA. The meeting will be to identify any issues or problems the pupil or family may have around attendance at School and will attempt to resolve any issues which are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- (f) If there is a persistent pattern of absence or lateness, the School will arrange a meeting with the parents or carers, the relevant Unit Head and BA to look at the reasons for the absence or lateness and to see what support can be given by the School to address any underlying problems.
- (g) The School will attempt to be flexible around the needs of the pupil given their diagnosis of ASD and will consider options such as different start and finish times, additional support and guidance around ASD and offer strategies to maximise attendance.
- (h) If the pattern of absence continues, The School will contact the relevant local authority to advise them of the issues around attendance and to obtain additional support and guidance from their specialist teams

2.4 Authorised and unauthorised absence

- (a) "leave" in relation to a School means leave granted by the School Principal.
- (b) The School Principal will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where she is satisfied that there are sufficient circumstances to justify the request.
- (c) As the School works to an extended academic year, there is some flexibility around attendance. In addition, as an independent school, the School is able to set its own holiday criteria.
- (d) Due to the individual needs of the pupils at the School, the School Principal will apply special consideration to requests for leave where a parent can demonstrate satisfactory reasons for absence

- (e) However, when considering any request, the School Principal will have regard to overall attendance and if this is considered low or unacceptable, requests will be declined.
- (f) It may be necessary for School to ask parents or carers to provide the School with written evidence of the reasons for absence, for example, appointment cards, medical certificates, letters from the GP.
- (g) If there is an extended period of absence due to medical reasons, the School may ask for permission from the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the pupil from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the pupil.
- (h) The School will also notify the relevant local authority of any extended period of absence

2.5 Strategies promoting attendance and punctuality

- (a) Parents and carers, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence. Due to the small nature of the School and the strong relationships between parents, carers and School there are ample opportunities to maintain awareness of any issues around attendance and punctuality.
- (b) As referred to above, in the instance of there being any issues, parents and carers will be offered a meeting with the School to look at support and strategies to support attendance and punctuality.

3 PUPIL ABSENCE MONITORING

- 3.1 At School, all registers must be returned to the School office by 10am.
- 3.2 If no contact has been received from parents or carers giving the reason for absence by 10am, absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 3.3 Where no contact has been received from parents or carers notifying of absence, any pupils who are absent will be contacted on their first day of absence by the School Office or School Manager.
- 3.4 The time of any calls made and received, together with the reasons for absence, will be recorded on the pupil absence monitoring form, which will then be held on the pupil file.
- 3.5 If on the first call to the relevant contact number, no-one answers, then a message will be left for the family to contact the School as soon as possible to explain why the pupil is not in School.
- 3.6 Parents or carers are expected to inform the School on every day of absence. If contact is not made, the School will contact them
- 3.7 If a pupil is absent for more than two days without contact, the Head of School or Head of Further Education will make further attempts to contact the parents or carers to follow up on the reasons for absence.
- 3.8 If the Office Staff, Head of School or Head of Further Education are unhappy with the reasons given for a pupil's absence, then the School Principal will be informed of any concerns. She will then follow up with the pupil's family and may also alert any relevant social worker or local authority contact.
- 3.9 In the event of unexplained or unexpected absences, the School will send a staff member to the home and if they are unable to ascertain the safety of the pupil and/or parent, they will call the police.

4 CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION ATTENDANCE

- 4.1 The School has a duty to inform the relevant Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or if a pupil has been missing for a continuous period of 10 days or more without permission.

5 SICKNESS

- 5.1 Although the School as an employer is legally responsible for health and safety within School, the School Principal, Education Team and specialist teaching staff are generally acknowledged to have a duty of care towards the pupils in their care as they are acting in loco parentis.
- 5.2 This duty does not arise from legislation but has evolved through common law and legal precedent upheld by the English courts
- 5.3 The School has pupils on roll, all of whom have a diagnosis of ASD, but many of whom have additional co-morbid diagnoses, including suppressed immune systems. It is the responsibility of the School to make sure that safety measures cover the needs of **all** its pupils.
- 5.4 This Policy should be understood and accepted by all staff, and is sent out to parents as well as being available on the school website. This policy provides a sound basis for ensuring that pupils receive proper care and support at school and also ensures that all parents are clear on the criteria used by the School when notifying parents of pupil sickness, and the expectations around the management of that sickness.
- 5.5 On occasion, all children and young adults will get ill.
- 5.6 By following the guidelines in this policy it reduces unnecessary exposure to illnesses and ensures infections are managed effectively creating a happy and healthy School for all pupils and staff working within it
- 5.7 Should your child become ill they should only return to School when they are over any symptoms in accordance with the guidelines shown in this policy leaflet and are well enough to do so.
- 5.8 The School will introduce an Individual Healthcare Plan (“IHP”) for all pupils with a diagnosed medical condition in accordance with our Mediation of Pupils Policy. This will include crisis management criteria around absence.
- 5.9 If your child becomes ill at School his or her condition will be brought to the attention of the Head of School, Head of Further Education or School Principal. A decision is then taken based upon:
- The usual presentation of the child. For example, where a child is known to have bowel function issues, whether the bowel motion is different from normal or usual motions;
 - Any agreed criteria in an IHP;
 - Where bowel evacuations are explosive and forceful and not the usual presentation of a pupil
 - If the child's body temperature appears to be high
 - When a child has vomited and presents as being unwell following this, for example exhibiting lethargy, high temperature, fever
- 5.10 If a child is ill at home, parents are requested to consider the welfare of other pupils within School and the impact any illness may have on them
- 5.11 The School follows Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings (or any subsequent updates) issued by Public Health England. This sets out Key Guidelines for exclusion due to illness as set out below.
- 5.12 **No Exclusion**

- Head Lice – provided immediate treatment is given at home
- Conjunctivitis
- Tonsillitis
- Roseola

5.13 48 Hours

- Vomiting – after last episode
- Diarrhoea – after last episode

5.14 5 Days from symptoms

- *Whooping Cough
- *German Measles
- *Measles
- *Mumps
- Chicken Pox

5.15 Other

- *Scarlet Fever – can return 24 hours after commencing antibiotics
- Scabies – until fully treated
- Ringworm – until on treatment
- Impetigo – until lesions have crusted over

5.16 ***Notifiable Diseases -** There is a list of notifiable diseases which we have a legal obligation to report to the Health Protection Agency and Ofsted should a child within our care become infected. Some are named in this leaflet and are shown by a ‘*’ by the relevant illness.

5.17 The School does not take the decision to exclude children on the grounds of illness lightly, as we recognise that many of our pupils may have co-morbid diagnoses which mirror those of illnesses may normally lead to the request for a child to be kept off School. However, as referred to in previous paragraphs, the School does have a duty of care to all of its pupils. Therefore if you are requested to keep your child off School for a period, parents are reminded that they must abide by this request even if their child presents as well when at home.

5.18 If the Head of School, Head of Further Education or School Principal deems it necessary for a call to be made to a parent or carer in the event of pupil illness as set out above, parents should make all necessary arrangements to collect their child as soon as possible.

5.19 It is therefore imperative that the School has alternative contact numbers for every pupil. If the School Office, Head of School, Head of Further Education or School Principal is unable to speak to the primary contact in the event of illness, a message will be left.

5.20 If no response is received to any such message within one hour of leaving it, the School Office/Head of School/Head of Further Education/School Principal will then contact the secondary or third contact.

5.21 If no response is forthcoming within an hour of the second and third contacts, a referral will be made to the relevant social services department at the Local Authority responsible for the pupil.

5.22 If it is deemed necessary for a child to be sent home due to illness, they will either be left in their individual teaching space, or taken to the School sick bay until they are collected.

6 PROCEDURE ON COLLECTION DUE TO SICKNESS

- 6.1 If a pupil is sent home due to sickness, the School Office will complete a pupil absence monitoring form confirming:
- The staff member who contacted parents or carers;
 - The time contact was made with parents or carers;
 - The method of contact (ie, telephone, text or email);
 - The reasons for the request for pupil collection;
 - The time the pupil was collected by parents, carers or transport.
- 6.2 A letter will be handed to parents or carers on collection of any pupil confirming the amount of time a pupil needs to be kept off School to ensure that the Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings (or any subsequent update) issued by Public Health England is complied with.

7 ROLES

7.1 Parents and carers will:

- Notify the School or College of any absences on the day of that absence;
- Keep close contact with the School if a pupil is on extended leave due to ill health.

7.2 Unit Heads will:

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance register of their Units;
- Correct any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register;
- Liaise with the School Management and School Principal in relation to any issues or concerns around attendance;
- Notify the School Manager and School office if they receive any direct communication from parents and carers in relation to pupil absence;
- Inform office staff if they receive any communication that a pupil will need to leave the School or college premises part way through the day by prior arrangement, eg for a medical appointment.

7.3 The School Office will:

- Maintain a central electronic record of pupil attendance;
- Telephone parents and carers as necessary regarding attendance;
- Pass on information regarding attendance to the School Manager and relevant Unit Head;
- Keep records as necessary in order to comply with local authority requirements;
- Make a note of reasons for absence on the pupil absence monitoring form and place on the pupil file;
- Make a note of any calls to collect sick pupils on the pupil absence monitoring form;
- Place notes from home in the pupil file.

8 REGISTRATION CODES

/	am attendance,
\	pm attendance
L	late arrival before the register has closed
B	offsite educational activity (so when pupils are out for whole day)
D	dual registered
J	interview with employers/other educational establishment
P	participating in supervised sporting activity
V	educational trip or visit
W	work experience
C	absence authorised by school (not on holiday)
E	excluded but no alternative provision made
F	Extended family holiday authorised by the school (more than 10 days)*
H	family holiday (less than 10 days)*
J	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	medical or dental appointments
R	religious absence (eg, Ramadan)
S	study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
G	Family holiday <u>not</u> authorised or in excess of agreed period
N	reason for absence not yet provided
O	absent from school without authorisation
U	arrived in school after registration closed

9 EXCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The emphasis of School is to achieve good behaviour amongst all the pupils and develop their own ability to focus on learning.
- 9.2 Encouraging and assisting pupils to communicate with tutors and their peers is a key element in the Schools program of education.
- 9.3 The high ratio of staff to pupils and consistent approach to behaviour is designed to ensure all members of the School are safe. A comprehensive behaviour plan for each pupil will form a working document for staff and be updated daily as appropriate, with information available to parents.
- 9.4 In the event of a pupil exhibiting behaviour which falls outside the behaviour plan or where there is an escalation of unusual challenging behaviour, the parents will be contacted to discuss any issues. This would be where the actions of the pupil disrupts the school, affects their education or that of the other pupils, or where the staff and pupils are placed at risk or harm.
- 9.5 The objective will be to identify any cause for challenging behaviour to establish unidentified problem areas. As part of this review process, if only all the strategies for addressing the difficulties have been exhausted and have not led to any positive change, parents will be asked to remove the pupil. Advice and possible outreach work will be offered to parents and referral to other professionals may be recommended.



10 PUPIL ABSENCE MONITORING FORM

Date	
Pupil Name/Code	
ABSENCE REPORT	
Reason for absence	
Absence reported to	
Absence reported by	
Time of contact	
Method of contact	
Reason for absence	
CALL TO PARENT TO COLLECT	
Reason for call to collect	
Request to collect made to	
Contact made by	
Method of contact	
Time of contact	
Time of collection	



11 PRO FORMA LETTER TO BE HANDED TO PARENTS/CARERS

Date :

Dear Parents and Carers

In order to minimise the risk of the spread of infection within School/College, you are reminded of the Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings (or any subsequent updates) issued by Public Health England.

This can be found <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

The Guidance sets out key Guidelines for exclusion due to illness including exclusion for 48 hours in instances of Vomiting and Diarrhoea.

The School Manager will notify Local Authority Transport of cancellation of transport for the minimal 48 hour period. If you need to keep your child off for a longer period, you should let the relevant transport department know.

Therefore your child must not return to School/College before

or 48 hours after the last bout of vomiting and diarrhoea.

I appreciate that this requirement can sometimes seem unnecessary, especially if your child appears to be fine, however it is important that it's adhered to for the benefit of all.

Thank you and kind regards

Sarah Gallagher

School Principal