



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Reviewed: August 2023**

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## 1. Aim

The aim of ISB Secondary School's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason, the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as possible.

ISB Secondary School takes a whole-school approach to maintain excellent attendance, and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances that may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### Senior Leadership Team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the SLT will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and children to implement the policy effectively.
- Take time at SLT and discipline committee meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyze attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems and make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.
- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance

and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement

- Coordinate with the director to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- Develop relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their children to attend
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future proceedings.

### **Form Teachers**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's Form Teachers will:

- Take attendance on time and accurately (morning registration and form time)
- Be proactive and consistent in the collection of notes to explain absences (not later than 2 days from the 1<sup>st</sup> absence).
- Be proactive in contacting parents when patterns or concerns start to emerge. (1st contact has to be on Educare).
- Record on file any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future proceedings.

### **Teachers and support staff**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Maintain an accurate register for every lesson.
- Attendance is taken in the first 5 minutes of the lesson.
- Report frequent lateness or absence to the child's Form Teacher initially or the KS leader if the problem persists.
- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.

- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed

### **Parents and carers**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. So that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.
- Do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Head of Secondary (see "Family holidays and extended leave" section)

## Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable
- Speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home, which may impact their attendance
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (see "Late Arrival" section). Pupils are held responsible for this, and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

## 3. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unexcused unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents can excuse their children for not more than 20 lessons per semester without a medical slip or director's approval.

Students are marked as absent when they are not attending the lesson, and these absences will be later excused by the tutor according to the school regulations.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by e-mailing the form teacher on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child.

### Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short-term, but parents will need to alert the school by the latest 9 am on the first day/each day of absence. When the child returns to school, they should bring a medical note explaining the absence – this is for the school records.

Form teachers should maintain a file containing copies of notes/e-mails excusing absences.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Subject teachers mark students as absent whenever they are not in their class, and only form tutors will modify absences into excused absences according to each case.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

### **Authorised absences**

Parents can excuse their child for personal matters for not more than 20 lessons per term. There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence, such as for a family bereavement or when students attend regular training and competitions at a professional level. In this instance, the Head of School needs to approve it. Subject teachers will mark students as absent whenever they are not in their class, and only form tutors will modify absences into excused absences according to each case.

If a student is participating in national or international competitions, their parents are required to inform the school's head at least two weeks in advance. Our goal is to assist in the student's growth while also ensuring academic success. As such, every request will be carefully reviewed and approved by the Head of School. When having external exams (IGSCE, IBDP, etc.), priority should be given to the exams, and parents are expected to arrange their schedules accordingly.

### **Exclusion/Suspension**

Exclusion/Suspension is treated as an authorised absence. The Head of Pastoral Care and Head of Sixth Form will arrange for work to be sent home, and absences will not be excused if a student is externally suspended. Absences will be excused only if the student is internally suspended.

### **Family holidays and extended leave**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents do not have the automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for this reason, but some leave may be granted by the Head of Secondary. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Head of Secondary 3 weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Permission will not be granted for leave during notified exam periods.

Absences will not be excused after they have taken place; they will be marked as unauthorised, and should the student miss any assessments during this absence, they will be awarded a 1. The school reserves the right not to arrange a test at a later date.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

When deciding whether to authorise absence, the Head of Secondary will take the specific circumstances into account. If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised.

### **Religious observance**

ISB Secondary School recognises that there may be times when children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

### **Study leave**

The school has a period of study leave leading up to the IGCSE and IBDP examinations, where students are granted authorised absence to revise at home. The school operates study sessions at school within this time to help with revision and to reduce the amount of time spent out of school.

### **Late arrival**

The morning registration will be taken from 8:30 to 8:40 by the form tutors. The students who arrive after registration time will be marked tardy. If a student is regularly late for the morning registration form, tutors are expected to reach out to the parents to address the concern. Form tutors will send the morning registration folder to the reception at 8:40 for the Pastoral Leader and Head of Sixth form to check it later during the day.

Pupils who arrive after 8:40 should go straight to their 1st lesson and must give their teacher a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised and may be referred to the respective form tutor. Should the form tutor deem it necessary, they can escalate the matter to the Head of Pastoral Care or the Head of Sixth Form.

Any late arrivals will be challenged by the form tutor during the tutor time that day. A negative comment will be entered on Educare.

Attendance is taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences are reported back to the Head of Pastoral Care or the Head of Sixth Form. If a student is late to the lesson, this will be recorded on Educare. A negative comment will be entered if the teacher feels that it is necessary.

Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action.



## **Skipping lessons**

Skipping a lesson is a serious offence. A student who is present in school but skips a lesson will receive a sanction at the discretion of the SLT for the first time. A repeat of this action for the second time will result in the student getting an internal suspension. Students will receive one day of external suspension if he/she skips the lesson for the third time. Skipping lessons any further might result in the student losing his/her contract for the next academic year.

## **4. School action: Following up absences**

All attendance registers are recorded on Educare. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Form Teacher or the respective SLT member will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

Where students have been away for either short or long-term authorised absences, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils who are discovered to be truanting, and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

## **5. School Practice regarding attendance / punctuality issues**

### **Daily Punctuality**

- If a student is absent for morning registration without the school being informed, the secondary office will contact the parents to check the student.
- Consistent tardiness might result in an Attendance and Punctuality Report for a week period. Negative comment made on Educare (by Form Teacher) each time. Parents will be informed.
- If attendance and punctuality issues persist, parents will be called to school for discussion regarding the child's situation. One-day internal suspension and/or the signing of an additional contract may also be considered.

## **Inter-lesson Lateness**

- Students late to the lesson will be recorded on Educare as Tardy. The teacher will use their discretion whether the lateness deserves a Negative Comment also.
- In extreme or repeated cases, students are directed to the Head of Pastoral Care or the Head of Sixth Form. They will use discretion regarding assigned sanction.

## **Absence**

- Students who maintain an excellent attendance record will be rewarded with attendance commendations.
- Students who have 10% or more unauthorised daily absences may have their behaviour mark reduced on their transcript/report.
- Any student whose daily attendance falls below 90% may also be required to repeat the year.
- All sanctions will be determined by the SLT after an analysis of each case.

## **Key Stage 5 Study Hours**

Non-attendance at optional study hours will not be considered an absence. Form teachers track the weekly academic progress of their students and attendance during the form time or morning registration. When the form teacher thinks more Study Hours would be required for a student, they may discuss an individual plan together with the Head of Key Stage Five.