Impington Village College
Attendance Policy 2026

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Impington Village College

Attendance Policy 2026

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Document Control

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Impington Village College Attendance Policy 2026

This policy applies to all students of compulsory school age at Impington Village College and will be used to inform attendance practices at Impington International College.

The school culture and ethos at Impington Village College values good attendance and this Policy aims to demonstrate our commitment to meeting our statutory obligations with regards to school attendance as laid out in the department of educations (DfE's) statutory guidance. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

Key Principles

- Students at Impington Village College have the right to the best possible education.
- For students to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- Students' ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy, achieve, and make a positive contribution may be jeopardised by poor attendance.
- For Impington Internation College pupils, future life choices may be jeopardised by poor attendance. This includes application to further and higher educational establishments and future employment opportunities.

Context

Impington Village College and Impington International 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, must be considered.

Impington Village College and Impington International College aims to

- Emphasise the importance, to all students, of maximum attendance to 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 regarding attendance and the categories of absence, which are deemed "authorised".
- Act early to address patterns of absence, including persistent absence and promote good attendance
- Emphasise the need for parent/carers and the college to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

Requirements/ Legal Responsibilities

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024).

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means the student must attend every day that the College is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances. The student must also arrive on time and be in class for 0900 every day. Irregular attendance leads to students missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential. It may also place 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 expects 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.

- **7 days** absence a year means that a student has missed approximately 40 hours of teaching time.
- **11 days** absence a year means that a student has missed approximately 70 hours of teaching time.
- **18 days** absence a year means that a student has missed approximately 115 hours of teaching time.
- **At KS4,** pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8% (approximately 16 days absence a year), compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 is over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

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) as well as a pattern of single day absences. Students should **not** have more than one or two broken weeks in an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the College.

Authorised Absences

The Principal cannot 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).

There are other absences, such as **approved sporting activities/music exams** that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from college; 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 can be obtained by going to the IVC website/information/Attendance. The form should be completed and returned to **attendance@ivc.tmet.org.uk**. Please apply for term time absence at least **10 College days** in advance.

The College expects absences to be kept to a minimum; **routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours.**

Unauthorised Absences

These are absences where:

- No communication or acceptable explanation is provided by parents/carers.
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of **authorised** absence above.
- Attendance has fallen to a level of concern as in stage 3 and 4 with a regular pattern of broken weeks due to nonspecific illness.

Guidelines state that the following activities would be classified as **unauthorised:**

- Cheaper holidays in Term time.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Relatives coming to visit or going to visit relatives.
- Birthday celebrations.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

There are clearly some grey areas. The 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 family birthday celebration would not.

You are reminded that as parent(s)/carers it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a referral to the Local Authority for enforcement actions to be considered. The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren). This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent. If a second penalty notice is issued for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine is automatically £160. For a third penalty notice within a three-year rolling period, the parent will automatically be listed for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation

to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

Persistent Lateness to College

It is the duty of parent/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. Regarding coding, if a student is late for College they will be registered with an L code. If they arrive after registers are closed (09:30am) this will mean that the absence will be unauthorised and registered as a U code.

Lates to College and during the day to lessons will be monitored and sanctioned when appropriate.

Home/IVC Partnership

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

- Ensure their child arrives **on time** for the morning session; morning registration begins at 9:00am. We will monitor persistent late comers; **parent/carers can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late;**
- If your child is ill, notify the school **on each day** of absence by **9:00am** via **EduLink** or **Attendance@ivc.tmet.org.uk**
- Ensure regular College attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Inform the College as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to College so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with
- Engage with early interventions designed to support the family and their child's attendance at College.

In return Impington Village College will:

- Contact home, each day of absence, if no message has been received from parent/carers.
- Follow up promptly any concerns parent/carers pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to or feeling of wellbeing in College.
- Involve the Attendance Team, Head of Upper or Lower Years and pastoral members of staff to support students to re-integrate into College after illness or other individual circumstances.
- Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Acknowledge improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Service
- Offer support when internal or external barriers are affecting a child's attendance.

Good Attendance

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

- House Teams will raise the importance of attendance during assemblies and tutor time.
- Attendance Data will form one part the House Cup awarded each summer.
- Praise post cards.

Study Leave

Impington Village College follows guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding study leave. The guidance states 'study leave should not be granted by default once the exam syllabus is complete, it should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations.' DfE guidance also makes clear that a student is of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year during which they turn 16.

Impington Village College applies this guidance in the following manner:

- The date for study leave starting will be decided on a year-by-year basis dependent upon the public examinations calendar.
- When study leave is granted, students who have not completed all coursework requirements will still be expected to attend school to complete this work before starting study leave.
- During study leave, Impington Village College will continue to make provision available for those pupils who want to continue to come in to school to revise.
- In exceptional circumstances, early study leave may be granted to students if there is a clear rationale for this being supportive to their individual needs.

IVC Strategy for Attendance Concerns

High attendance levels are achieved due to staff working collaboratively together with students and families and requesting external support when needed. Below are the 5 stages as well as the staff involved in this policy.

Stage 1

A pattern of broken weeks are detected by the monitoring of attendance on a weekly basis by the Attendance Officer.

Interventions include a letter sent to parent/carers from the **Attendance Team** informing them of the level of attendance. **Head of Upper or Lower School** are kept informed. Other interventions may include phone calls with parent/carers to address any in-school barriers to attendance. **Head of Upper or Lower School** will raise attendance concerns with the respective **Tutors**. They will advise the **Tutor** on how to best support the student.

Stage 2

Attendance Officer identifies trend broken weeks has continued.

Interventions include a letter sent home to Parent/Carers from the **Attendance Team** informing them of the level of attendance.

A meeting will be offered in this letter to discuss support that could be offered for the student. The most appropriate member of the College staff will lead this meeting depending on the circumstances of the child and family.

Stage 3

Attendance Office identifiers broken weeks continue with a greater concern regarding progress and attainment.

An Attendance Contract will be offered to the parent/carer in writing. This is a supportive meeting and entered in voluntarily. It is important that the student also attends this meeting to allow them to contribute to the agreed support. This meeting will be with the most appropriate member of the College staff. The Attendance Officer will attend all meetings. Regular reviews of this contact will take place to identify if support has been successful and appropriate.

Areas of discussion will include:

- Peer / Staff relationships
- Academic progress
- Behaviour/Attitude
- Home related difficulties
- Medical needs
- Barriers to College both internal and external

Locality support will be discussed and offered. This is an Early Help Assessment which the College will apply for through the Local Authority. If accepted by the Local Authority, this may include a request from them that a Parenting Course is completed before further support can be offered. Further details of this can be found at:

cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/parenting-and-family-support

Further information on your rights and responsibilities can be found at:

cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities

Stage 4

Attendance Contract fails.

If there is no engagement by the parent/carers or the Attendance Contract fails to improve attendance, the Local Authority will be notified for a Notice of Improvement to be actioned. The parent/carer will be informed of this in writing. The letter will include a legal warning and the period of which the child's attendance will be monitored and the required level of attendance expected.

Stage 5

Referral for legal sanctions

If the monitoring period is failed, the case will be referred to the Local Authority for action.
The College will continue to offer support to the student and family.

Please note:

Students with 15 consecutive days of illness with be discussed with the Local Authority to identify support available.
Students with 10 consecutive unauthorised days will also be referred to the Local Authority

Local Authority Attendance Intervention

The LA Attendance is a statutory service and a legal requirement. Their involvement is triggered by an unacceptable level of:

- Unauthorised absence
- Persistent absence
- Lateness

At Impington Village College the Attendance Office monitors attendance at a whole college level and specifically targets the students whose attendance falls to a level of concern. The Attendance Officer is also responsible for ensuring that Impington Village College's policy and practice is compliant with the Local Authority's legal duties and processes. This includes taking

direction from the Attendance Champion when a Notice to Improve is requested from the Local Authority as well as any referral for legal sanctions.

Legal Action

All parents/carers 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 a Local Authority investigation. Where necessary, the Attendance Team will refer cases to the Local Authority for legal intervention. 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/carer for each student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. The penalty is a £160 fine, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 28 days, a prosecution will be sought. For a second penalty in a three year period this will automatically be charged at the higher rate.
- For a third penalty notice within a three-year rolling period, the parent will automatically be listed for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.
- 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 a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

A Final Word

The College believes 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 with the students' wellbeing. Equally, consistent attendance is an **essential** pre-requisite for effective learning.

Impington Village College takes attendance seriously and have put a lot of resources into creating an efficient and effective procedural policy. We urge you to give this matter the priority it deserves.

If you would like to discuss any issues around your child's attendance, please contact the Attendance Team at attendance@ivc.tmet.org.uk or your child's Head of Upper or Lower School

Key staff 2025-2026

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The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Term time absence not authorised	Pupil is absent for a reason not authorised by the Principal
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Link to Working Together to improve School Attendance DfE from 19 August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf