

ATTENDANCE POLICY**CO-P-1****1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 Regular attendance is essential for learners to achieve their full potential. Indie Education is committed to promoting a culture where excellent attendance and punctuality are the norm, in line with our Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), including “Working Together to Improve Attendance” and “Keeping Children Safe in Education.”

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 Act 1996: Parents/carers must ensure their children receive full-time education.
- 2.2 DfE Guidance: This policy follows the latest DfE guidance on attendance and safeguarding, including “Working Together to Improve Attendance” and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 2.3 Equality Act 2010: Procedures are applied equitably, with reasonable adjustments for SEND and protected characteristics.

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 High Expectations: Aim for attendance above 96%.
- 3.2 Positive Culture: Attendance is promoted as part of a respectful, safe, and supportive environment, consistent with our Behaviour Policy.
- 3.3 Safeguarding: Absence is a safeguarding issue; all unexplained or persistent absences are followed up.

4. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE**4.1 Authorised Absence**

- (a) Illness (with evidence if requested)
- (b) Medical/dental appointments (where possible, outside college hours)
- (c) Religious observance (1 day per festival)
- (d) Bereavement
- (e) Approved educational activities (e.g., exams, visits)

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

- (a) Holidays in term time (unless exceptional circumstances)
- (b) Absence without explanation
- (c) Arriving after registers close
- (d) Shopping, birthdays, or looking after siblings

4.3 Persistent Absence

- (a) Attendance below 90% triggers additional monitoring and support.

5. PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- 5.1 Registers completed within 10 minutes of session start.
- 5.2 First-day absence calls and follow-up.
- 5.3 Attendance data monitored and reported to the Board of Trustees.
- 5.4 Certificates and rewards for excellent/improved attendance.
- 5.5 Early intervention for at-risk learners.

6. REPORTING ABSENCE

- 6.1 Parents/carers must notify the college by 9:15am on the first day of absence, stating the reason and expected return date.
- 6.2 If no contact is made, the college will attempt to reach parents/carers and may conduct a home visit if necessary.
- 6.3 If the reason given is valid, the absence will be authorised. If the reason is not satisfactory, then official DfE guidance will be referred to and the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Similarly, if no explanation is offered at all, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.
- 6.4 Absence of 5 days or more without contact triggers a safe and well check and safeguarding procedures.
- 6.5 Absence of 10 days or more (consecutive or cumulative) is reported to the Local Authority.

7. ILLNESS, MEDICAL, AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

- 7.1 Learners are occasionally absent through illness and, for most pupils, this is a short absence. If there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, either the college or the Education Welfare Service may refer the matter to a doctor or contact the family GP. Learners who are regularly absent due to medical reasons will need to communicate effectively with the college and provide supporting evidence so that the college can best support the learner.
 - (a) Reporting: All absences due to illness or medical appointments must be reported in line with Section 6 (Reporting Absence). Parents/carers must notify the college by 9:15am on the first day of absence, stating the reason and expected return date.
 - (b) Authorisation: If the reason given is valid, the absence will be authorised. If the reason is not satisfactory, then official DfE guidance will be referred to and the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Similarly, if no explanation is offered at all, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.
 - (c) Medical Evidence: Where a learner is regularly absent for medical reasons, the college may request medical evidence (such as a doctor's note or appointment card) to authorise further absences and to ensure the right support is in place.

- (d) Appointments: Leave for dental treatment and doctor's/hospital appointments will be authorised if the college is properly notified and the appointment cannot be taken out of college hours. Parents/carers are asked to use entry sign within the college reception and speak to a member of our staff if they take their children out for an appointment during the college day, and to provide evidence of the appointment (e.g., a letter or screenshot).

- 7.2 If your child is reluctant to attend college, please alert the college as soon as possible. The college will work with you and your child to understand the reasons for reluctance and provide appropriate support. Seeking support, rather than excusing absence, reinforces the importance of attendance for your child's wellbeing, learning, and safeguarding.

8. LATENESS

8.1 Registration Times

- (a) Morning registration starts at 9:00am and closes at 9:30am.
- (b) Afternoon registration starts at 12:30pm and closes at 1:00pm.
- (c) By law, the college must register pupils twice each day.

8.2 Managing Lateness

- 8.2.1 Indie Education discourages late arrival at college. Pupils are recorded as late once the register has been taken and submitted. Registers remain open for the first thirty minutes of each session. The Secretary of State has determined that arriving 30 minutes or more after the start of registration, without a valid reason, will constitute an unauthorised absence.
 - 8.2.2 If your child arrives after the start of registration (after 9:00am or 12:30pm) but before the register officially closes (9:30am or 1:00pm), they will be given a late mark (L). The college will accept the explanation given for the late arrival as valid and reasonable (e.g., a late bus, car breakdown, or a one-off family difficulty). If your child is late due to exceptional circumstances, no action will be taken.
 - 8.2.3 If your child arrives after the register has closed (after 9:30am or 1:00pm), and no valid reason is provided, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) for that session.
 - 8.2.4 If your child is frequently late (3 times or more per term), we may ask to meet with you to identify and address any issues causing the lateness.
 - 8.2.5 If lateness persists, the college may decide not to authorise further late arrivals, and unauthorised late marks will be recorded. The Education Welfare Service regularly monitors lateness and may be present in college to support this process.
- ### **8.3 Why Punctuality Matters**
- 8.3.1 Your child's education is important, and being late can mean:
 - (a) Missing the beginning of lessons
 - (b) Missing breakfast and vital emotional check ins

- (c) Not hearing important information about college and lessons
- (d) Not being able to complete work because vital information was missed
- (e) Feeling embarrassed or anxious about entering a lesson that has already begun
- (f) Being late for the start of important assessments
- (g) Missing the opportunity to develop the vital life skill of punctuality, which is essential for future education and employment

9. LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

9.1 Holidays Within College Time

9.1.1 Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence, and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking learners away in term time. Any savings made by taking a holiday in college time are offset by the cost to your child's education and the risk of Fixed Penalty Notices.

- (a) There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in college time for holidays or other trips (DfE "Working Together to Improve Attendance").
- (b) All applications for leave must be made in advance by completing the leave of absence form from the college office.
- (c) In accordance with the law, agreement will only be given where the Headteacher considers the reason for the request to be exceptional. The decision will be confirmed in writing. Without this written confirmation, it cannot be assumed that any absence is authorised.
- (d) Any period of leave taken without the Headteacher's written confirmation, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child.
- (e) Penalty Notices are fines of £60, increasing to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay by the 28th day may result in the Local Authority proceeding to the Magistrates' Court.

9.2 Family Bereavement

9.2.1 The death of a close family member is a traumatic event in a pupil's life. The college will always respond sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or associated events, and such absences will always be authorised, recorded, and monitored.

9.3 Religious Festivals

9.3.1 Absence for observance of religious festivals is classed as authorised absence.

9.4 Off Site Activities

9.4.1 Approved educational visits (e.g., music/dance exams) are treated as authorised absences. These visits must be requested with proof from the testing organisation.

9.5 Excluded Pupils

9.5.1 Absence due to exclusion will be treated as authorised. Excluded pupils are not allowed out to

play during the college day.

10. MONITORING ABSENCE

10.1 Absence and attendance are monitored by centre leads, DCEO, CEO and Board of Trustees, who monthly review attendance figures and progress against targets and action to address trends and persistent absenteeism.

10.2 Persistent Absence

10.2.1 A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance is at 90% or below. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any young person's educational prospects, and we need full support and cooperation to tackle this. Pupils identified as persistently absent are monitored carefully and are highly likely to be referred to the Education Welfare Service, in line with DfE guidance.

11. CHILDREN FROM TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES

11.1 Traveller children of compulsory college age are expected by law (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) to attend at least 200 sessions out of the possible 380 sessions per college academic year. The use of the Traveller code (T) for more than 180 sessions could indicate that the pupil has failed to meet this requirement. Absence for travelling purposes should only be coded "T" when the parent is engaged in trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. Otherwise, the child is required to be in college as usual.

- (a) The attendance of children from travelling families is treated with equity and fairness, considering the cultural needs of our Traveller community.
- (b) Traveller families are subject to the same regulations as all other families, with discretion where travel is for business purposes.
- (c) Traveller families will be requested to complete a Traveller Request Form before a child's period of absence commences for business purposes and/or if the child will be accessing education in another location.
- (d) Absence linked to travel for the following reasons will not constitute travel for work purposes and will not be authorised: bereavement, weddings, visiting relatives, religious observance in excess of 1 day, pre-wedding preparations, birthdays.
- (e) Where a family does not inform the college or seek permission for absence before departure, the absence will not be authorised.
- (f) The Traveller Pupil Tracking Form records details of local residence, contact numbers, intended travel dates, and expected return date. If the pupil is dual registered with a college outside the local authority, dual registration procedures will be followed.

11.2 By working jointly with parents/carers, specialist support from the Traveller Education Service, and the Education Welfare Service, we aim to achieve better educational outcomes for our

Traveller children and young people.

12. MONITORING AND INTERVENTION

- 12.1 Attendance is monitored by the leadership team and reported to the Board of Trustees.
- 12.2 Learners with persistent absence or patterns of concern receive targeted support, which may include:
 - (a) Meetings with parents/carers
 - (b) Therapy or interventions to support the underlying reasons for the absence
 - (c) Individual support plans
 - (d) Referral to external agencies (e.g., Education Welfare Service)
 - (e) Safeguarding referrals where appropriate

13. SAFEGUARDING AND ATTENDANCE

- 13.1 All staff are trained to recognise that poor attendance may be a sign of safeguarding concerns.
- 13.2 Attendance concerns are escalated in line with the Indie Education Safeguarding Policy and “Keeping Children Safe in Education.”
- 13.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is informed of any patterns of absence that may indicate a child is at risk.

14. ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR

- 14.1 Good attendance is a key expectation of the Indie Education Behaviour Policy.
- 14.2 Attendance issues are addressed using restorative and supportive approaches.
- 14.3 Where poor attendance is linked to behaviour or wellbeing, a holistic support plan is developed.

15. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

- 15.1 Reasonable adjustments are made for learners with SEND, medical needs, or other vulnerabilities.
- 15.2 Attendance procedures are applied fairly and consistently.

16. THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Indie Education uses a computerised system for attendance records. The following national codes;

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical/dental appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	College closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

17. RECORD KEEPING

17.1 Attendance records are maintained securely for at least three years.

17.2 Parents/carers may request a copy of their child's attendance record at any time.

18. SAMPLE LETTERS

18.1 First Absence Letter

Dear [Parent/Carer],

I wanted to make you aware that [Learner's Name] was absent from college on [Date]. Please contact the college office to confirm the reason for this absence. Regular attendance is vital for your child's progress and safeguarding.

Yours sincerely,
[Staff Name]
[Role]

18.2 Persistent Absence Letter

Dear [Parent/Carer],

I am writing to express concern about [Learner's Name]'s attendance, which is currently below 90%. We would like to meet with you to discuss how we can support improved attendance and address any barriers.

Please contact the college office to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,
[Staff Name]
[Role]

18.3 Unauthorised Leave Letter

Dear [Parent/Carer],

Your request for leave during term time for [Learner's Name] has not been authorised as it does not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. Any absence taken will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Yours sincerely,
[Staff Name]
[Role]

18.4 Lateness Letter

Dear [Parent/Carer],

We have noticed that [Learner's Name] has been late to college on several occasions. Punctuality is important for learning and safeguarding. Please ensure your child arrives on time.

Yours sincerely,
[Staff Name]
[Role]

19. REVIEW

19.1 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance.

20. REFERENCES

- (a) Indie Education Behaviour Policy
- (b) DfE "Working Together to Improve Attendance"
- (c) DfE "Keeping Children Safe in Education"
- (d) Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

21. AUTHORISATION

21.1 Authorised by CEO