International School of London

Attendance Policy

Date reviewed:
August 2025

To be reviewed:
August 2026

Mission statement

Since 1972, we have established a welcoming and inclusive community. Our diverse cultures and languages drive all our learning experiences.

We nurture creativity and curiosity to stimulate deep thinking. We foster insight, compassion and resilience to enable us to play a meaningful part in a changing world.

Vision statement

We celebrate our stories, our worth and our purpose to make a difference in a shared world.

At the International School of London, we believe in:

Empowering students to maximise their learning opportunities and to fulfil their potential.
Actively integrating cultural diversity in the curriculum.
Creating inclusive, vibrant and innovative learning communities.
Offering a diverse and extensive international programme that supports personal, social and professional growth.

Attendance Policy

International School of London - Policy and Procedures

- ***Introduction***

  ISL London is a highly successful school, and both parents and students play an important part in making it so. We aim for an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to reach for excellence. According to the Department for Education, students who miss less than 5% of school achieve at much higher levels than those who are absent for longer, which is why we strongly encourage and support good attendance. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

  Why attendance is important

  Learning: Learning at our school is very interactive, requiring the participation of the students with the teacher and one another during class. This is adversely affected when a student is absent or habitually late - not only for that student, but for the dynamics of the entire class both during their absence as well as upon their return, when time is taken to reintegrate them into the learning context of the class. Additionally, home assignments can help make up lost work, but cannot replicate the discussions led by the teacher, questions raised by other students, or the activities conducted in class.

The law in this country requires all children who are educated at a School to attend so long as they are well. Permission not to attend school may be granted by the Divisional Principals for a valid reason, such as illness. If permission is not given, or the student becomes 'persistently absent', then the family is in breach of the law and could face consequences from the Local Authority, including parenting contracts, penalty notices, an Education Supervision Order and/or prosecution. In addition, MYP and DP students may not meet course and/or programme requirements if their attendance is inadequate. This may also impact a student's ability to meet High School Diploma requirements.

Safeguarding: Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for every student encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:(a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.*

The Law relating to safeguarding:

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will report to parents on how their student is performing in school and their attendance rate.

Understanding types of absence

Every absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are times away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, visa issues, religious observances, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave" has been given by the Divisional Principal. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school late
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss significant amounts of schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parent’s fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. The parent of any student who is at risk of moving towards persistent absenteeism will be informed of this immediately so that the situation can be rectified.

Absence Procedures

If a student is absent their parent must:

- Contact the divisional/attendance secretary as soon as possible on the first day of absence or email the home tutor with the reason for the absence

- Send a doctor’s note for any illnesses exceeding five consecutive days

If a student is absent, we will:

- Telephone, email or text on the first day of absence if we have not been notified of absence. Invite the parent in to discuss the situation with the Head of Year if a pattern of absence is established.
- Invite the parent in to discuss the situation with the Divisional Principal if a pattern of absence persists in liaison with guidelines from Hounslow Council (see below)

Contact Information

There are times when we need to contact parents about many things, including absence; therefore, we need to have accurate contact numbers or email addresses at all times. It is vital that parents notify the school of any changes in contact information.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their form/class teacher getting vital information for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and encourage further absences.

The school day starts at **8:30am** and we expect all students to be in class at that time. If a student has a persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet with the Head of Year and/or Divisional Principal to resolve the problem.

Time off in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during term time. There is **no** entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance. In making a decision, the School will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including the nature of the event, frequency of requests, advance notice and any previous pattern of leave in term time.

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be authorised:

· When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as the student needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

· Immediately before and during assessment periods.

· When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.

· Where a student's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking time off.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions.

We understand that there are various reasons why there may be issues with attendance from illness to individual family circumstances and we want to ensure that we work with families and to support individual family needs.

You will therefore receive updates for your child's attendance throughout the academic year. These letters are shared with you for your knowledge and information regarding the percentage for your child's attendance.

Please be aware that the process of attendance letters, as per Hounslow Council guidance, is as follows:

-Letter 1- Attendance falls under 95%

-Letter 2 - Attendance falls under 90%

-Letter 3 - Attendance falls under 85%

These percentages take into consideration:

· All absences, even medical and authorised absences are accounted for.

· Any authorised absence. This does not mean it will not affect your child's attendance. This still gets counted as a day of absence.

· All lates are also accounted for and all medical appointments.

Any further concerns after letter 3, as per Hounslow Council guidance, must be referred to the local authority.

At ISL we value on-going communication with our families and when there are individual circumstances such as family concerns, bereavement and long-term sickness for example, it is important to understand that under statutory guidance, we have to justify all decisions taken on attendance. Please kindly be aware that in such instances, we will often request follow-up information to justify our position. Our priority will always be the best interests of your child and to support you with any barriers that you may face which may hinder your child's attendance.

Summary

The school has a duty to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible, such that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

At ISL London, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.