

International School of Creative Arts

Attendance Policy

March 2020

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ISCA School Attendance Policy

Introduction

ISCA is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality. ISCA recognises that central to raising standards in education and to ensure uninterrupted progress, is the need for students to attend school regularly. Being absent without leave can have a serious effect on a student's academic and social progress and development on their welfare. Missing out on lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind and not meeting their progression ambitions.

Legal framework underpinning attendance

This Policy complies with the *Education Act 1996 the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013*.

Under the legislation parents and carers are responsible for ensuring students attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority. As ISCA is a Boarding School, it closely monitors Students' attendance to lessons by use of a register.

The register is a legal document and schools must take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes. Only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate code.

Holidays during term time are normally refused unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be considered by the Head of School on a case by case basis. Whilst the Head of School will consider all requests on a case-by- case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the Head of School. Where possible, ISCA should look to have a consistent approach to all leave of absence requests.

The legal framework governing school attendance is summarised in *School attendance: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (2016)*, published by the Department for Education (DfE).
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

ISCA follows guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by the Buckinghamshire Local Education Authority (LEA), regarding school attendance.

Aims

The ISCA attendance policy is intended to address the following points:

1. To protect the safety of students by ensuring that all boarding students are on campus, unless authorised to be absent
2. To support the students' academic progress by enforcing attendance at timetabled classes

3. To conform to Home Office, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) reporting requirements so that ISCA performs its Tier 4 sponsorship duties effectively.

Attendance expectations and monitoring

Good attendance and punctuality is essential to ensure that students make good academic progress and feel part of school life. Full attendance on every school day is expected, along with any specific weekend requirements.

Attendance is monitored in the morning before class, in the afternoon and in the evening by electronic registration to safeguard students and ensure all are present. Additional class attendance registers are kept by all subject tutors as a method of monitoring progress and ensuring students are accessing teaching contact hours in line with school attendance targets.

Registers are held centrally in the school office for administrative access and monitoring.

- On a weekly basis information from the electronic morning, afternoon and evening registration is printed out and archived. The electronic register also generates attendance statistics that enhance the schools monitoring capability.
- On a weekly basis, class attendance data is entered into the school database, which automatically generates attendance statistics that enhance the schools monitoring capability.

Parents of international boarders must make sure that holidays are not extended either side of the School holidays. Parents are, therefore, urged to book flights well ahead of the holidays so that they do not encounter problems with limited availability of flights

Students are expected to attend and be punctual for school every day, when school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. The following are the attendance and punctuality expectations of ISCA students:

- Attend all lessons and all relevant activities when at school
- Be punctual and arrive at lessons on time particularly those which come after a break/ lunch
- Be ready to learn and organised with the right equipment
- In the case of sickness, students should inform boarding staff. If illness occurs whilst at home or offsite during the holidays, parents should contact the school.
- Follow the protocols in place for late arrival and can expect sanctions in line with the school's behavioural policy
- Students may be asked to bring in proof of illness, sickness or other causes of absence
- Inform a trusted staff member if they are being bullied or if they feel uncomfortable for any other reason while they are in the school environment

Absence – definition and type

Authorised v. Unauthorised absence

If a student has a reason for being absent which the School decides is justified, the student will be marked as having an 'authorised' absence. If their reason for absence is unjustified, the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'. Arriving late at the start of term, or leaving before the end of term, usually will be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Absence due to illness

If a student is unable to return to School after a holiday or weekend away due to illness, their parent/guardian must notify the School by email to exeat@isca.uk.com. Until they inform the School, their absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'.

The student should produce authorised medical evidence/a certificate for any extended period of absence (over 3 days).

Absence due to an appointment

If a student needs to leave School during timetabled classes because they have an appointment, they must inform the School Office 24 hours ahead of time and complete an Academic Permission Form. As far as possible, appointments should be made outside School hours, so that their programme of study is not interrupted. (Refer to the list below for reasons considered as appropriate authorised absences)

Absence due to illness whilst in school

If students are too ill to attend morning registration, they must inform boarding staff before 8:30 am via WhatsApp using the boarding phone number. Until they do this, their absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'.

On receiving notification of illness from a student, the on-duty boarding member of staff will either ask the student to come to the Sick Bay or visit the student in her/his room, depending on how ill the student is deemed to be. After meeting the student, boarding staff will decide whether their absence can be authorised and what action to take e.g. recommend student rests for the morning, send student to see a doctor etc.

If a student falls ill during the School day, they should report to the School Office. The School Secretary or the on-duty member of boarding staff will decide whether their absence can be authorised and what action to take.

Absence due to an accident whilst in school

If a student cannot attend classes following an accident necessitating medical intervention, then the matter should be reported to the School Office, and the absence will be authorised.

Criteria for Authorised Absence

The following would be considered suitable reasons for an authorised absence:

- Sickness (medical evidence required for any absence over 3 days).
- Medical appointments that could not be made outside School hours.
- Visits to therapists/counsellors that could not be made outside School hours.
- Visits to university/HE Open Days or career-related interviews - as discussed with and agreed by their tutors.
- Attendance at a funeral or wedding of a close family member.
- Severe travel disruption that leaves students with no method of travel.
- A driving test.
- Genuine family emergencies.
- Exceptional extra-curricular activities such as representative sport at national, regional or county level.
- Adverse weather conditions that lead to travel disruption.

The following would be considered unacceptable reasons for authorised absence:

- Holidays during term time.
- Part or full-time work that is not part of a programme of study.
- Leisure activities.
- Birthdays or family celebrations.
- Babysitting.
- Driving lessons.
- Dropping or picking up family members at/from airports.
- Caring for friends or family members.

The above lists are not exhaustive and each request should be considered on its merit.

Using the Registration Codes

The attendance register is taken:

- In the morning every week day, between 8:00 and 8:30 am
- In the afternoon every weekday, between 12:45 and 1:25 pm
- In the evening every day, between 9:00 and 10:00 pm Sunday to Thursday, and 9:00 to 10:30 Friday and Saturday
- At the start of every lesson

On each occasion it must be recorded whether every student is 'Present', has an 'Authorised Absence' or an 'Unauthorised Absence'.

By default, all students will be marked 'N' in the morning, afternoon and evening registers, which means that no reason has yet been given for being absent. Class registers will simply be blank by default. This should be replaced by one of the following codes:

Present

Students are considered 'Present' for the following reasons:

- / if they are present
- L if they are late
- B if they are off site for an approved educational activity e.g. CLASP
- J if they are at an interview e.g. for university placement
- V if they are on an educational trip e.g. Swanage, Gallery Visit etc.

Authorised Absence

Students are granted 'Authorised Absence' for the following reasons:

- I if they are ill
- M if they have a dental or medical appointment
- H if they are on leave or holiday and it has been approved by the School
- C if there is some other exceptional reason for absence, approved by the School

Unauthorised Absence

Students are considered to have 'Unauthorised Absence' for the following reasons:

- G if the student is on leave or holiday without approval from the School

- U if the student turns up 'Unreasonably Late' (see below for definition)
- O if the school is unsatisfied with the explanation given
- F if the student leaves and fails to return, missing more than half the class/ session*

* the 'F' code applies to class registration only

Follow up and Verification

Registry will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason and inform the DSL where appropriate to ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken. Registry should identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct code to use.

Every morning before 10:00 am and every afternoon before 3:00 pm, Registry will circulate an email to all tutors with a list of students who are absent, the reasons and the correct code to apply on their class registers.

The same list will be sent to the DSL, boarding staff and office staff so that all student-facing staff are informed of student attendance.

By the end of a registration period, the code 'N' should be replaced with one of the other codes to describe their attendance.

Unreasonably Late (code 'U')

- For *class registration*, 'Unreasonably Late' is when a student turns up later than 20 minutes after a class has begun, for sessions of 1.5 hours or longer. For lessons which are less than 1.5 hours long, 'Unreasonably Late' applies if a student is more than 10 minutes late.
- For *morning and afternoon registration*, 'Unreasonably Late' is when a student has been absent without an acceptable explanation and reports to the school office after 9:30 am in the mornings and 2:30 pm in the afternoons.
- For *evening registration*, 'Unreasonably Late' applies when a student, who has been granted leave to go off site for the evening, returns after curfew without keeping boarding staff sufficiently informed of where they are and why they have been delayed. This applies even if there is a good reason for being late. Students who are late but do keep boarding staff informed, should be marked 'L'.

A complete summary of the national codes is shown in Appendix A.

Taking Registration

Evening Registration

Evening registration will be done using Live Register.

Evening registration takes place every day, between 9:00 and 10:00 pm Sunday to Thursday, and 9:00 to 10:30 Friday and Saturday).

Students register biometrically with their thumb/finger print using the biometric units spread around the school.

Students should register by reporting to the on-duty boarding member of staff in the School office if:

- they do not wish to share their biometric information with the School
- the biometric units are not working for some reason

At the close of registration, the on-duty boarding members of staff will check to ensure everyone is present or has an authorised absence, manually entering the appropriate codes on Live Register (see above).

All students must be accounted for. If a student is absent without explanation, boarding staff will make every effort to find the student. If the student cannot be found, the guardian, parents and DSL will be informed. If the student remains unfound, the police should be informed.

Morning and Afternoon Registration

Morning and afternoon registration will be done using Live Register.

Morning registration takes place every week day, between 8:00 and 8:30 am

Afternoon registration takes place every week day, between 1:00 and 1:30 pm

Students register biometrically with their thumb/finger print using the biometric units spread around the school.

Students should register by reporting to the Registrar in the School office if:

- they do not wish to share their biometric information with the School
- the biometric units are not working for some reason

At the close of registration, the member of staff on chase-up duty will check to ensure everyone is present or has an authorised absence, manually entering the appropriate codes on Live Register (see above).

Students who are unaccounted for will be contacted by the member of staff on chase-up duty using WhatsApp and, if necessary, by visiting the student's room. Students whose absence cannot be authorised will be directed to go to the lesson or activity they are timetabled to attend.

After chase-ups are complete, the member of staff on chase-up duty should update Live Register and provide the Registrar with a summary of students who are absent from class and the reasons. This should be done before 9:30 am for Morning Registration and before 2:30 pm for Afternoon Registration.

All students must be accounted for. If a student is absent without explanation, the member of staff on chase-up duty will make every effort to find the student. If the student cannot be found, DSL should be informed. If the student remains unfound, first the guardian and parents will be informed and later, if necessary, the police.

Class Registration

Class Registration will take place using electronic class registers prepared each week by the Registrar and shared with tutors on Google Drive.

Subject tutors are responsible for maintaining registers for students attending their classes.

For classes that last a whole morning or a whole afternoon (i.e. 3 hours), 2 registrations are required. A roll call should be taken at the start of the lesson and then a second time after students return from break.

For lessons which last 2 hours or less, only one registration is required.

Tutors should fill in the class registers using the statutory registration codes. They should refer to the instructions in this policy on 'Applying Registration Codes'.

The Registrar will send an email to all tutors at 9:30 am and 2:30 with a list of absent students and reasons for their absence, so that tutors can update their registers accordingly.

Tutors should immediately send a message to the Boarding Phone if students:

- are absent for unknown reasons
- disappear from class during the lesson
- do not return after the break

In this way, chase-up staff can follow up students and find out the reason for their absence.

Attendance and Requirements

All Students

Students are expected to maintain their attendance by being present in each subject for at least 80% of Class Registrations, taking all tests and submitting all assignments set by their tutors. The School believes that students whose attendance falls below this level will be jeopardising their chances of achieving their academic potential. 'Authorised Absences' will be counted as an absence in this calculation.

Failure to satisfy the above requirements could have serious implications for the successful completion of the student's course. In particular, students may not be permitted to enter for examinations and/or submit assignments if their attendance level is unsatisfactory.

The parents/guardians of students who do not maintain the required attendance levels will be informed, and in extreme cases, the student may be excluded from the School. However, this last step would only be taken after full consultation with the student and after careful consideration by the Senior Management Team (SMT). Every effort will be made to support students whose absence is due to extenuating circumstances.

If a student's attendance is being affected by difficulties which they feel gives them extenuating circumstances, the student should discuss this with his or her Tutor in the first instance, who may then refer the student to the Head of School.

International Students

As far as possible, attendance policies will be applied to all students, regardless of whether or not they are in the UK on a student visa. However, the attendance of students who are studying on a student visa is governed by UKVI regulations, which have to be taken into account at all times.

The UKVI requires that students studying at levels 5 and below be required to attend a minimum of 15 hours per week. In addition, attendance must be carefully monitored and students reported after 10 consecutive missed 'contacts'. However, every effort is made to work with students who have genuine health or other reasons for poor attendance.

'Contacts' are defined as Morning Registration. Afternoon, Evening and Class Registration are not considered a 'contact'.

Sanctions

Please see ISCA Student Code of Conduct and Student Behaviour Policy for details.

Student Withdrawal

Because ISCA is a boarding school, any unauthorised absence of a student from the ISCA campus will be taken very seriously. If a student misses Morning, Afternoon, Evening or Class Registration and cannot be found on campus or reached by mobile phone or email, the DSL will be informed and the student's parents and/or UK guardian will be contacted in the first instance. If the student remains out of contact then the police will be informed and, if necessary, a missing person's report will be filed.

Apart from any police activity which may be underway in relation to a student's absence, if a student fails to respond to all efforts to contact him/her then a final letter/email will be sent informing the student that if we do not hear from them within 5 working days, we will assume that the student has withdrawn from the course. If the student does not contact us within that period, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course.

If the student contacts the School but is still not attending then extenuating circumstances will be considered and if appropriate, the student will be given the opportunity to defer his or her studies to a future intake. In the absence of acceptable extenuating circumstances, a student who has missed more than 10 consecutive contacts will normally be deemed to have withdrawn from the course.

International students

If an international (Tier 4 visa) student reaches 10 consecutive missed 'contacts' then a final attempt will be made to contact the student (via parents/guardians as necessary). If the School is unable to establish contact with the student, then UK Visas and Immigration will be notified within 10 days of the last recorded contact.

If a student on a Tier 4 visa withdraws early from their course, this must be reported to UKVI within 10 working days. Failure to do this puts the School's Tier 4 Sponsor Status at serious risk.

Children at Risk of Missing Education

ISCA will report to the Local Authority if it has a serious concern over a child's attendance or the child has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Also, ISCA will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education after a period of 10 consecutive days to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Preservation and Amendments to the Attendance Register

Entries must be in ink on paper registers and any amendments must show

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made;
- and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

A computerised register counts as being in ink. Where the attendance register is kept by means of a computer, an additional back-up copy must be made either electronically or as a printed copy, not less than once a month.

These back-ups/additional copies of the admission register and the attendance register must be retained for three years after the end of the school year in question, as must registers hand-written in ink.

Appendix A: Attendance Codes and Descriptions

Code	Full name	Description	Code type
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.	The student is counted as present
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed	
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.	The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.	
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.	
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.	
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.	
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.	
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion.	The student is counted as absent, authorised
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.	
I	Illness	The student is ill (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.	
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.	
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.	
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.	
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.	

Code	Full name	Description	Code type
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head of School.	The student is counted as absent, unauthorised
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.	
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.	
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.	
F	Failed to Return	If a student leaves and fails to return, missing more than half the class/ session	
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.	These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures
X	Not Required (Non-Compulsory School Age)	The child is of non-compulsory school age and is not required to be in school during this session. This code should only be used for students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.	
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.	
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.	