



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2014/15

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.”

The Department for Education – June 2013

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Leave of Absence Policy, Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Management Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy

Regular school attendance is essential for children and young people to maximise their educational process. Irregular attendance disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

Parents or guardians of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise. (*Education Act 1996*).

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. The school encourages the maximum possible attendance for each pupil. The importance of attendance is stressed throughout the school and regularly reinforced to the pupils and parents. Unnecessary absence is always investigated and if appropriate, the LA is informed of unauthorised absence.

Under the provisions of the *Education Act 1996 (s434)* and the *Pupil Registration Regulations 1995* the school must keep an attendance register. The school is registered with the Information Commissioner under the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

Aims

To improve the overall percentage attendance and punctuality of pupils at school by:-

1. Applying the Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Establishing and maintaining a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Using an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that pupils who should be attending the school have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the school.
4. Relating attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
5. Monitoring progress in attendance against measurable outcomes.
6. Making attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
7. Providing support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
8. Developing a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
9. Further developing positive and consistent communication between home and school.
10. Implementing a system of rewards and sanctions.
11. Promoting effective partnerships with the LA and with other services and agencies.
12. Recognising the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Rewards

Good attendance is encouraged and rewarded throughout the school (see Awards Policy). In addition, all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 are encouraged to maintain their attendance record in their planners and to use the information in the reviewing processes. All pupils receive their percentage attendance and punctuality record in their school progress reports.

Sanctions

Poor attendance is discouraged through the vigilance and preventive actions of the staff, Interventions Manager (IM) and Pastoral Staff. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the use of sanctions such as report cards and detentions are also measures that can be applied.

Where attendance is very poor, a Governor's Attendance Panel is held to meet pupils with their parents/carers. The panel, consisting of the Interventions Manager (IM), a Governor, Head of Key Stage Progress and a member of the SLT as appropriate, plus other outside agencies, consider the pupil's attendance record and any factors that are relevant.

The purpose of the above meeting is to agree remedial procedures that support and improve the attendance of the pupil. The panel can instigate a number of strategies to monitor and support the pupil's attendance. The panel can make a recommendation to the Headteacher, should the pupil's attendance not improve and put the matter to the Local Authority who may prosecute the parent/carer using the provisions for penalty notices.

During this meeting a Parenting contract will also be signed by the parent and the school to identify how both parties will work together to improve attendance.

Lateness

Pupils are actively encouraged to arrive to school on time. Punctuality will be monitored and parents will be informed where concerns are raised and patterns emerge.

Members of staff will monitor lateness every morning and record the names of pupils who are late to school. Each time a pupil is late parents/carers will be informed by text message.

Pupils who are late more than 3 times in a week will be issued with a Pastoral Detention. Parents will be informed and invited into school in cases of persistent lateness.

Where pupil punctuality to school does not improve a penalty notice may be issued (see below)

Penalty Notices

There is a clear link between attainment and attendance of pupils and the school is keen to ensure that pupils attend whenever possible. Any parent whose child fails to meet the schools requirements and has no genuine authorised reason for absence may receive a Penalty Notice (under section 444 of the education act 1996).

Prosecution for this offence can lead to Penalties that can range from £120 Penalty notice to £1000 fine for each parent and a criminal record. Penalty Notices can be used for unauthorised absence, unapproved leave and persistent lateness to school. All parents will be advised of the school's intention to use the notices and each year a reminder will be issued. This can be issued to parents twice per school year should no improvement be made.

Taking the register

All pupils of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of this school to register ALL pupils.

The register must be updated twice daily at the start of morning and afternoon sessions. All Tutor Group registers will be closed 30 minutes after the end of the morning registration and 10 minutes after the start of the afternoon registration.

The register must record the following:

- Whether the pupil is present, absent, or attending an approved educational activity.
- When a pupil of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' absence; and
- The nature of the approved educational activity (for a pupil of compulsory school age).

Approved Educational Activities

An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:

- a) One taking place off the school premises;
- b) Approved by a person authorised by the governing body or the Headteacher;
- c) Supervised by a person approved by the governing body or Headteacher;
- d) Of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, or for a place in higher or further education; and
- e) Link courses where pupils attend an FE college for part of their time, or franchised pupils receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school supervision (e.g. Sick children being taught at home), or attending approved sporting activity;

MPBES Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body Will:

- Approve the policy and any proposed changes.
- Receive reports from the Headteacher.
- Review the working of the policy in the light of the Headteacher's report.

The Headteacher Will:

- Set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target-setting process.
- Report on attendance to the governing body annually.
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school, and is known by the parents.
- Determine (in collaboration with the Senior AHT and IM) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made.

The Senior AHT Will:

- Monitor progress; and ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school.
- Notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence.
- Initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance.
- Deal with issues of inadequate registering.
- Liaise with the LA and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school.

The IM Will:

- Oversee the attendance arrangements.
- Work with the attendance administrator to ensure the efficient running of the system.
- Make daily checks of the registers to monitor pupil absence and punctuality to school
- Make regular checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence.
- Ensure that unaccounted-for absences are followed up by communicating with parents/carers. If the circumstances are suspicious or urgent and there is concern about a pupil's welfare it will be forwarded to the Senior AHT.
- Arrange appropriate training for staff.
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with.
- Keep the Senior AHT informed of the progress of the policy.
- Advise the Senior AHT on any strategies that could be initiated or improved.
- Liaise with the LA over persistent absentees.
- Issue FPN Notices for persistent poor attendance / punctuality
- Ensure that the school admission and attendance registers are available for inspection by HMIS, registered inspectors and, for LA maintained schools, by an LA officer.
- Present attendance rewards in Year Group and Full School Assemblies.

The Attendance Administrator Will:

- Make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering.
- Make regular checks on absence notes.
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is reported to the IM.
- Contact parents over pupil absences where appropriate.
- Follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes.
- Make reports to the IM and Senior AHT on the efficiency of the system
- Liaise with the IM over training needs.
- Generate weekly attendance data for Heads of Key Stage and Progress Tutors
- Produce all certificates for rewarding attendance

Heads of Key Stage Progress Will:

- Meet weekly with the Progress Tutors to discuss concerns and collect attendance referrals.
- Meet weekly with IM to discuss the attendance of their cohort of pupils.
- Ensure attendance remains high profile through assemblies and tutor time activities
- Support IM in rewarding good and improving attendance (see Awards Policy).

Progress Tutors Will:

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately using the PARS system;
- Ensure that all pupil absences are noted and absence notes received from parents;
- Keep the IM and Head of Key Stage informed of any signs of suspected truancy;
- Inform the Head of Key Stage of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences.

Classroom Teachers Will:

- Ensure all pupils are registered using the PARS system, every lesson
- Inform the school office of the any signs of suspected truancy.

Parents Are Required To:

- Ensure the child attends regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('Attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session);
- Inform the school of their absence on the first day of non-attendance;
- Ensure absences be accounted for by a telephone call or letter. Where the parents/carers are unable to write the letter, it may be written by another member of the family, but signed by the parent/carer.
- Discuss with the tutor any planned absences well in advance (e.g. a family holiday);
- Make any request for leave of absence on the school's official leave of absence form.
- Contact the Interventions Manager (IM)/attendance administrator with problems related to attendance.

Religious Observance

There is no legislation or regulation or DFE guidance on this matter. The Headteacher will review each application reasonably, and in consultation with the Senior AHT, IM, Head of Key Stage Progress and the parents. The school expects advance notice, since religious festivals are likely to be well in advance

Leave of Absence

Holidays during term time are **NOT ALLOWED**. School holidays are the time when families should take holidays.

It is the responsibility of parents, guardians and school to encourage 100% attendance at school for every child. To grant holiday in school time gives the message to the child that their school work and school life is not important and such a message can be very damaging to the child's progress.

Leave of absence from school may be granted for exceptional reasons. This is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. In judging whether to approve requests the following criteria will be used:

- Attendance records for the previous year/current year must be greater than 95%
- Previous requests made
- The Year group of the pupil (very unlikely in Years 10 & 11 due to GCSE exams)
- The reason for the request must be for exceptional circumstances only.
- The pupil's attainment and ability to catch up on lost work

Evidence in writing, confirmed by external professional body showing why the leave of absence is needed by the child must be submitted along with the parental request to the Headteacher.

Each request for leave of absence will be judged individually by the Headteacher. Cheaper flights, availability of certain days for parents, already having made the booking and financial commitments/loss will not be accepted as reasons to allow leave of absence.

Where leave is not granted, parents will be notified in writing.

Where absence occurs despite leave not being authorised or applied for, absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Leave of absence will not be granted in retrospect.

If a parent takes a child on holiday when leave of absence is not authorised by the Headteacher or the child is absent for over 10 sessions, a penalty notice will be requested from LCC by the School.

In extreme circumstances a pupil may be removed from the school roll when a parent has chosen to remove them from school for an extended period without permission from the Headteacher. In such cases parents will need to reapply to have their child readmitted to the school roll. (See below)

Dental and medical appointments are valid reasons for missing registration and constitute authorised absence. If the pupil leaves for an appointment after registering no absence needs to be recorded. However the school advises that where possible appointments should be made outside of school hours.

The school may, exceptionally, sanction limited absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made. The Headteacher will set a time limit for such absences in consultation with the Senior AHT and Head of Key Stage Progress. The Headteacher may also seek advice from the LA or appropriate agency before coming to a decision.

Distance From School

A pupil will not have failed to attend regularly if the parent can prove that the school is not within walking distance (defined as two miles for children under 8 and three miles for children over 8), in each case measured by the nearest available route, and where the LA has not made suitable arrangements for:

- Transport;
- Boarding; and
- Changing to another school nearer to the home.

Where there are such occurrences the Headteacher will consult with the LA, and the chair of governors as appropriate.

Part-Time Attendance

The only reasons why a pupil might attend school on a part-time basis are:

- **A temporary medical condition** : This should be supported by written medical advice and Larches Medical should be informed
- **Part of their education is being received away from school site at another location**: This should be recorded as “approved educational activity”
- **Limited school timetable for a period as part of a reintegration plan**: This will normally only apply to pupils at risk of Permanent exclusion and who are on a Pastoral Support Plan.

Removal from School Register

The Headteacher will authorise the taking of a pupil’s name off the register in accordance with the current Regulations. Pupils will be removed from the school register if:

- Children Missing Education Team (CME) have been informed and can confirm that the pupil no longer resides at an address which is a reasonable distance from school
- Written communication has been received from another school confirming the pupil has been enrolled at that school
- The pupil has been absent from school for a period of 4 weeks or more and both the School and the CME have failed after “reasonable enquiry” to locate the pupil
- The permanent exclusion process has been completed.

Education Outside School

Where parents choose to educate their child at home they must provide written notification to school. Where notification is received the child’s name will be removed from the school roll and a copy of the written notification will be sent to the Local Authority.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will review the working of the policy with the leadership group and make at least annual reports to the governing body.