

# Attendance Policy



**Approved by:** SLT 4.9.2024

Reviewed:

# Attendance Policy

## Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## At Ladycross

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Statistically, we know that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both Primary and Secondary school.

Ladycross Infant and Nursery School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential. Our school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure. All school staff work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping.

## Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

**1. maintain or improve the overall percentage of pupils' regular school attendance.**

This means:

- applying this Attendance Policy consistently.
- establishing and maintaining a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- relating attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
- monitoring changes in attendance on a half termly basis.
- discouraging holiday absence by making parents clear about their legal rights regarding holiday absence.
- stressing to pupils and parents that high rates of attendance lead to sustained and therefore successful learning.
- improving the rates of children arriving on time for the start of the school day.
- reach our target of 95% attendance or above.

**2. make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors**

This means:

- producing termly/annual reports to parents/governors.
- discussing attendance at induction meetings for new parents/pupils.
- making clear the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and training days.
- making clear the procedure for parents with regard to lateness or absence.
- providing training for appointed staff with regard to attendance.
- displaying materials promoting good attendance on website.
- discussing attendance issues in relevant staff meetings (e.g., attendance review meetings).
- using award systems; certificates, to reward excellent levels of attendance.

**3. develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.**

This means:

- maintaining unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
- making phone contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
- ensuring clearly defined late registration procedures.
- responding swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
- defining clearly the roles and responsibilities with regard to attendance procedures, within the school staffing structure.
- reviewing attendance regularly.

**4. provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.**

This means:

- highlighting attendance in PSHE, Assemblies and Parents' meetings (including pre-school meetings)
- setting aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
- seeking improved communication with parents e.g., when parents ring in.
- providing accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
- providing accurate references and information for parents at the end of half terms where a child's attendance has fallen below 90%.
- considering later registration times on days of bad weather or where transport issues arise encouraging parents to get children into school as soon as possible.

**5. developing a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.**

This means:

- using consistent attendance codes following LA guidance.
- being consistent in the collection and provision of information.
- deciding what information, if any, is provided for: governors, other school staff, parents, pupils (individual or groups), Early Help services

- Monitoring and identifying developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

**6. further developing positive and consistent communication between home and school and ensure the Safeguarding of children.**

This means:

- initiating first day absence contact.
- promoting expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
- exploring the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Aim 2).
- providing information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and nonwritten).
- encouraging all parents into school.

**7. implementing a system of rewards for good attending children.**

This means:

- actively promoting attendance and associated rewards
- ensuring fair and consistent implementation.
- involving pupils in the evaluation of good attendance.
- presenting Best Attending Class Award, weekly in assembly
- taking action in accordance with objectives agreed between school and others, e.g. Early Help, parents, Behaviour Support Service.

**8. recognising the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.**

This means:

- being sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
- involving/informing all staff in any reintegration process.
- providing opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- considering peer support and mentoring.
- involving parents as far as possible.
- agreeing a timescale for the review of reintegration plan.
- including Early Help, parents and pupil in reintegration plans.

## Definitions

### Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

*Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.*

## **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

## **Procedures and Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### **The Role of the Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher will:

- receive data from the office on a weekly basis showing whole class attendance. This is used to present weekly attendance bears
- receive class lists of attendance data at the start of every half term detailing individual attendance rates from the start of the school year. The Head Teacher then sends out copies of individual herringbones and a note of explanation to all those with attendance below 90%.
- Implement School Graduated Attendance Response by Group (Appendix 1)

### **The Role of the Class Teacher**

- The teacher is responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken. (Support Staff/Teaching Assistants may be required to complete the register on behalf of the class teachers.)
- The register is taken at the start of each session, 9am and 1pm.
- Attendance is recorded using the attendance register. The appropriate symbols must be used (see appendix) as agreed.
- Registers are currently completed on Arbor MIS system using the staff laptop.
- Persistent lateness is reported to the Head Teacher as should any degree or pattern of absence creating a concern to the class teacher.

### **The Role of Office/Admin Staff**

- To monitor registers on a daily basis.
- Check absence notes and change any unauthorised absence codes if a message has been received in the office.
- If no message has been received by 9:30am, office staff ring child's contact numbers and find reason for absence. Family are always contacted on the first day of absence.

- Prepare class attendance summaries on a weekly basis, so that the head can present Best Attending Class Award teddy in Mondays assembly.
- During the first week back after every holiday, prepare class lists recording individual attendance rates enabling the Head Teacher's monitoring process.

### **The Role of the Parent/Guardian**

- It is the statutory duty of every parent/guardian to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996)
- Parents must contact the school on the first day of absence notifying the school the reason why the child will not be attending.
- Where a message confirming absence has not been received, parents may be required to send into school a written note explaining the reason for each absence. (A blanket reason for a series of absences is not accepted)
- Regarding Leave of absence – A leave of absence form must be completed prior to the absence taking place. The parent must make the case for the period of absence e.g., booking holidays because it is cheaper in term time is not an acceptable reason for holiday absence.

## **Registration**

The school doors open at 8.50 and children are expected to be in school by 9am this gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using Arbor MIS. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule

## **Lateness**

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30 will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school after the register has been marked will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

See School Graduated Attendance Response by Group (Appendix 1)

## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

## **Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time**

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence Form (Appendix 2) available from the school office and handed in two weeks school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

See School Graduated Attendance Response by Group (Appendix 1)

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

## **National framework for penalty notices**

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

### **Children who are absent from Education**

School follows the current Department of Education guidance regarding procedures schools must follow when children move school. School must inform the LA of any child that we believe has left and not provided forwarding information. If we are unable to establish a child's new school, we would have to refer them as an absent child to the Education officer. When children leave Ladycross Infant and nursery school, at any point, we will follow correct procedures to ensure that the children have successfully transferred and are safe and in their new setting.

Appendix 1					Graduated Attendance Response by Group						
Trigger/Group		Trigger/Group		Trigger/Group		Trigger/Group		Trigger/Group			
All 1. No trigger		Low Need: 1.Holiday requests		Emerging Need 1.Lates 2.90-95% attendance		Intensive Need: 1.Lates 2.80-90% attendance 3.Persistent Absence 4.No contact from family in 3 days 5.EHCP/SEND 6.Mental Health need		Specialist Needs 1.Less than 80% 2.Children missing in education 3.Part time timetables			
<p>Headteacher monitors attendance this role is based on cultivating strong and respectful relationships with families, children and staff to build trust and open communication about the importance of attendance. Aim to raise understanding of parents' legal duties and the child's right to a full education. Provide robust strategies, systems and management to maintain school good attendance, alongside treating each case individually. Aim to have all children in school with high levels of attendance, happy and wanting to learn.</p>											
<p>-Provide interesting, exciting curriculum and enrichment activities that children want to be part of - Make school a welcoming inclusive place for all where children feel a sense of belonging -Attendance features in weekly celebration assemblies -- -Attendance included in start of term letters and updates - Communication to parents, children and staff re good attendance and impact - Monitoring of cohort trends through termly tracking using DFE attendance program - Attendance policy reviews and approved annually by governors and available on school website.</p>		<p>-Parents spoken to regarding holiday requests when children start school -Leave of absence requests unauthorised for holidays in line with Attendance Policy and government guidelines. -Holidays escalated to DCC for penalty notices through admin process -Letter issued</p>		<p>-Late and attendance reviewed ½ termly. - figures considered on an individual basis (e.g., if low attendance due to one bout of illness cause of low attendance) - Phone call/informal conversation with parents' carers where attendance is below 92% to raise awareness with a view to attendance not becoming persistently absent -Consider offering Breakfast Club attendance to support school attendance - Any concerns relating to lateness/absence related to safeguarding issues reported to DSLs and reported on My Concern. - Staff raise any concerns with SLT</p>		<p>-Consider issuing letter ½ termly where attendance below 90% - all cases looked at on an individual basis -Consider offering Breakfast Club attendance to support school attendance - Consider involving Family Support worker -Consider referral to external agencies -CAMS/Ed Psych/BSS - Any concerns relating to lateness/absence related to safeguarding issues reported to DSLs and reported on My Concern. -Staff raise any concerns with SLT</p>		<p>-Attendance panel as part of wider early help -Consider referral to family support worker -Consider referral to Starting Point - Follow Children Missing Education protocol -Any part time timetable reviewed on six weekly basis. Any reduction in timetable needs to be in the best interest of the child and regularly reviewed by parents and school -Any concerns relating to lateness/absence related to safeguarding issues reported to DSLs and reported on My Concern. -Escalate to LA for an education supervision order/fines <a href="mailto:Prosecution_ews_hq@derbyshire.gov.co.uk">Prosecution_ews_hq@derbyshire.gov.co.uk</a> 01629532157</p>		<p>Attendance Panel/Early Help Process. Invite parent/carer. Panel made up of 2-3 members – HT/DHT/Class teacher/SENCO/Family Support Worker/Governor Meeting aim to develop a plan to improve attendance Pastoral support plan if needed/Wider agencies signposted to parents Breakfast Clubs Support offered Six weekly reviews Signed off panel when improvement made and maintained</p>	

Appendix 2 Leave of Absence form

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM**

PLEASE NOTE - The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** state that Headteacher's should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Child(ren) ..... Year Group .....  
..... Year Group .....  
..... Year Group .....

Childs Address .....  
.....

Name of Applicant(s) and Address (if different).....  
.....  
.....

**I / We wish to apply for our child(ren) to be absent from school for EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES on the following dates.**

From..... To.....

Total number of days our child(ren) will be absent from school .....

Please supply in as much detail as possible the reason for your request and why you feel it is **exceptional circumstances**. Please include the names of the adult(s) who will be with your child(ren) during their absence from school.

Continue over the page if necessary

Signed (both parents if applicable) ..... Date .....

**IF THE REQUEST IS FOR A FAMILY HOLIDAY PLEASE SUBMIT IT BEFORE THE HOLIDAY IS BOOKED.**