



LEEDS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SHARP LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Academic Year 2024-25

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Should any organisations outside of the Leeds Local Authority incorporate large sections of this policy without alteration please make acknowledgement of this.



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This Attendance Policy is available on the school website and is reviewed and ratified annually by the governing body/board of trustees or as events or legislation requires. Any deficiencies or weaknesses identified will be remedied without delay.

Academic Year	Headteacher	Senior Attendance Champion (SLT)	Nominated Governor for Attendance	Chair of Governors
2024-25	Timothy Smith (September 2024-March 2025) Rebecca White (March onwards)	Louis Parish	Sarah Lawton	Anna Weeks

Policy Review Date	Date Ratified by Governors	Date Shared with Staff
September 2025		

School Name	Sharp Lane Primary School
Attendance Target	96%
School Opens At	08:45
Registers Close At	09:15

1. Contact List – September 2024

Role / Agency	Name and role	Contact Details
Headteacher	Timothy Smith (September 2024-March 2025) Rebecca White (March 2025 onwards)	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
Senior Attendance Champion SLT	Louis Parish	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
Attendance Officer	Debra Hopton	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
Governor with responsibility for Attendance	Sarah Lawton	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
Chair Of Governors	Anna Weeks	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
School Office	Lara Garside	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
Learning Mentor	Gemma Owens	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
Family Support Worker	Jessica Glover	0113 831 5551 contact@sharplane.co.uk
School Attendance Service (SAS)	Queries relating to attendance	0113 3785994 Schoolattendanceservice@leeds.gov.uk
Elective Home Education (EHE)	Queries around Elective Home Education	EHE@leeds.gov.uk
Children Missing Education (CME)	Referrals for children missing education	0113 378 9686 CME@leeds.gov.uk
Education Safeguarding Team	Advice / Training / Safeguarding Audit	0113 3789685 estconsultation@leeds.gov.uk

2. Policy Statement

Sharp Lane Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them to reach their full potential. There is a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school make much better progress socially and academically. Regular attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, schoolwork, and friendship groups.

Sharp Lane Primary School aims to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that every child can get the best out of the educational opportunities provided.

By working in partnership with parents and other agencies, we ensure that we have clear and robust strategies in place to manage and promote regular attendance for all students at Sharp Lane Primary School.

We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parents and carers.

This attendance policy is part of broader suite of safeguarding policies and should not be viewed in isolation. Safeguarding policies include the Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying policy and behaviour policy.

3. Aims

3.1 The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their responsibilities with respect to Attendance and understand the correlation with safeguarding.
- Parents, carers, and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year are recognised and rewarded.

3.2 The responsibilities set out in this policy apply (as appropriate) to all members of the school community including pupils, parents, staff, and governors. It is fully incorporated into the whole school ethos and culture.

4. Legislation and guidance

4.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance,

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/123456/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

4.2 The Education Act 1996 states that:

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who are absent for more than ten days without explanation.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

[Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/partVI) - Part 6

[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/26/partIII) - Part 3

5. Partnership Expectations

What the school expects of our pupils
That pupils attend regularly on time and ready to learn
Pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment
Pupils who arrive after registration time report to the office
Pupils tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school

What the school expects of parents/carers
Ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time to fulfil their legal responsibility
Notify school on the first day of absence and provide reason for absence
Complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances
Supply medical evidence when required
Ensure all parental and child contact details are up to date
Provide school with two emergency contact details
Speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child/ren from attending

What the parents/carers can expect from the school
A broad, balanced education
Encouragement and rewards for good attendance and punctuality at school

Prompt action when a problem has been identified
Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
Contact with parents and carers on the first day when absence is unexplained
Liaison with officers from the Local Authority from a variety of teams to assist and support families where needed
Regular communication with parents and carers

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Headteacher

The Head is responsible for:

- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2024. [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2024)
- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and whole school attendance.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Ensuring all staff are aware of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, Children's Social Work Services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.
- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families, and other stakeholders to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area/cluster, LAs, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6.2 The School Senior Attendance Champion SLT

The School Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy with the Head.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Championing and improving attendance.
- Ensuring the practice that is in place to address persistent and severe absence is robust.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Oversight of data analysis -
 - Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes, raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
 - Robust school systems are in place which provide useful data at cohort, group, and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
 - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
 - young carers
 - children who are eligible for free school meals
 - children who speak English as a second language
 - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
 - Keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.
 - Compiling attendance data for the Head, the Governing Body and the Local Authority.
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the School Attendance Service is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.

6.3 Teaching staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date.
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns.
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns.
- Emphasizing with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families, and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or who are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
 - treat pupils with dignity
 - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence
 - handle confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually.
- Emphasize the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment.
- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom.
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions.
- Apply rewards and sanctions consistently.
- Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence.
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality.
- Review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early, and help set targets.
- Periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments.
- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction.
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils.

6.4 Attendance and pastoral staff

Attendance and pastoral staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate.
- Ensuring robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- Tracking and following up absence and poor punctuality (implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures).
- Providing appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice.
- Carrying out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identifying any absences that are not explained for each session and contacting parents to understand why, and when the pupil will return to school.
- Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance inputting the correct code as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 school days after the session.
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided. For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and making the necessary referrals.
- Undertaking home visits in line with safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying and, where possible, mitigating potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies.
- Implementing children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate.
- Where pupils have additional vulnerabilities, which may require multi-agency meetings trying to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible.

For pupils at risk of persistent absence

- Providing regular attendance reports to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- Initiating and overseeing the administration of absence procedures.
This should include:
 - letters home
 - attendance clinics
 - engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
 - working with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard-to-reach families and finding methods that work and are understood
 - consideration as to whether further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
 - providing regular reports to leaders on the at-risk cohort
 - providing regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

For pupils who are persistently absent

- Developing and implementing persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines.
- Identifying tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil.
- Leading daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support, make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Liaising with school leaders (designated safeguarding, SENDco and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments.
- Coordinating and contributing to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions.
- Working in partnership with School Attendance Service and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures.
- Providing regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions.

7 Attendance procedures

7.1 Registration

- Registration takes place each morning at 08.50 and each afternoon at 13:00.
- Class teachers will enter a present mark (/) on the register for each pupil present and an absent mark for any pupil that is absent.

7.2 Responding to lateness

- Classroom doors open at 08:45 and close at 08:50.
- If a pupil arrives after 08:50 they must enter through the main office and be signed by their parent on the school's Inventory system.
- If a pupil arrives after 09:00 they will be marked as late on the register using a code 'L'.
- If a pupil arrives after 09:15 they will be marked as unauthorised late on the register using a code 'U'.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late.

7.3 Responding to absence

- Repeated absences will lead to detailed monitoring by the school attendance staff and parents will be informed by letter.
- No absences will be authorised unless dated medical verification is shown.
- If attendance does not improve during the monitoring period then parents may be invited into school to discuss the potential barriers to regular attendance.
- A plan may be implemented by school with support to remove the barriers to regular attendance.
- Targets for improvement will be clear and communicated to the pupil(s) and parent or carer.
- School may organise support to remove barriers to regular attendance.
- School may organise meetings with parents or carers to review and improve attendance.
- If attendance does not improve, school will refer to the local authority for legal action either through 'Fast Track' or legal intervention summoned through court.

7.4 Working with the Local Authorities School Attendance Service

- School works in partnership with the statutory School Attendance Service to devise a strategic approach to attendance through Register Checks and Targeted Support Meetings.
- The Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion (SLT) and the Attendance school staff will meet with an Attendance Improvement Officer from the School Attendance Service when required, to discuss and improve attendance for persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action plans will be developed for persistently and severely absent pupils.
- If parents/carers do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal legal intervention may be requested from the School Attendance Service.
Statutory intervention can include
 - Penalty Notices (see appendix 1)
 - Parenting Order
 - Education Supervision Order
 - Prosecution

8 Authorised and unauthorised and absence

8.1 Authorised absence

Authorised absence is defined as:

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment (where possible routine appointments should be arranged out of school time)
- Bereavement – (Headteacher's discretion)
- Religious observance (The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong)
- Approved leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence

Parents and carers should request exceptional leave of absence by completing the 'Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term-time' form (see appendix 2) and submitting this to the school as early as possible. Copies of this form can be requested through the school office.

8.2 Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is defined as:

- Being late after the registers have closed - 'U' code
- Staying at home to care for younger children or sick relatives
- Going shopping or having a haircut
- Where no explanation is offered by the parent or carer
- Where the school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- Special occasions e.g. birthdays/weddings
- Holidays/leave in term time
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment
- Translating for family members

- Visiting sick relatives
- Exceptional term time leave longer than agreed by the Headteacher

8.3 Promoting good attendance.

Good attendance is defined as attendance above the school's target of 96%.

- School may develop internal and/or external systems to reward 'good attendance', such as events, prizes, and certificates.
- Parents reserve the right to request consideration to be made for their child(ren) to access such rewards when exceptional circumstances have been the sole cause for low attendance. This will be discussed in conjunction with the senior leadership and attendance teams to form a decision.

9 Children Missing Education (CME)

A child who is absent as well as missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Where a child is reported to be missing education we will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who falls within the reporting notification requirements outlined in [Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE September 2016\)](#) and **follow the Leeds Children's Services LA procedure** and contact: cme@leeds.gov.uk. Tel: 0113 3789686.

New National Penalty Notice Framework (unauthorised school absence)



The following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines from 19th August 2024 across the whole of England

- Schools MUST consider a penalty notice for 10 unauthorised sessions (usually 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period of time (these sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of any unauthorised absences and can span different terms and school years).
- Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child (For example, if there are 3 children in a family, each parent may receive 3 separate penalty notices).

National Penalty Notice Framework (offences in a three year rolling period)

First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence (or any further offences within 3 years)
The first penalty notice will be issued at £160 per parent if paid within 28 days (this will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days)	The second penalty notice will be issued at £160 per parent if paid within 28 days (this will not be reduced)	A penalty notice will not be issued, and the case will be considered for potential legal action. This can result in a criminal record and fines of up to £1,000 plus costs.

APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME



Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term-time

DATE OF REQUEST:			
First Name	Surname	Date of Birth	Class
Leaving date:		Date due back in school:	
Length of absence applied for (number of school days only):			days
Siblings in other schools: Please note this request information will be shared with the attendance lead in the school in which the sibling/s attend	First Name	Surname	School
Contact Details			
Parents: (eg. Mother, Father, Grandparent, Carer)	First name:		First name:
	Surname:		Surname:
	Address:		Address:
	Postcode:		Postcode:
	Email:		Email:
	Home phone number:		Home phone number:
	Mobile:		Mobile:
Alternative number while away:		Alternative number while away:	
Reason for absence including full explanation (use a separate sheet of paper if necessary) The exceptional circumstances are...			
Point of departure (eg. Airport, Coach, Train Station etc.):		Destination:	
Time of departure:		Flight numbers and name of airline:	
Emergency Contact Details (preferably someone who is staying in Leeds): First Name: Surname: Address: Postcode: Relationship to the child: Contact Number:		*Provide copies of travel plans to support your request.* If child is not leaving with parent(s) who is accompanying them? Who will be caring/responsible for the child? Why is/are the parent(s) not leaving with the child? Name: Relationship to child:	

	Address: <u>Postcode :</u>
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Statutory Declaration

Legal responsibility

As a parent/guardian I understand all children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, it is my responsibility as a parent to ensure the regular school attendance of my children and that failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Education Authority.

I understand that requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances, and holidays are not considered exceptional. They must also be made to the school in advance, as the Department for Education has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Fines

- *First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.*
- *Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.*
- *Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. A guilty verdict at the Magistrates' Court can lead to a fine of up to £1000, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities.*

School places

I am aware that a referral will made to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team (CME) if my request is unauthorised, and my child hasn't returned to school on the agreed date. This can result in my child losing their school place.

I am also aware that there is a shortage of places in the area, so if my child loses their school place it could result in having to travel to a school out of area or my child without a school, being a detriment to their education and causing implications to my own employment.

Parent's Full Name:

Parent's Signature:

Date:

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SCHOOL SECTION
(To be completed by school only)

Application Outcome		
Any previous requests Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Is the leave of absence request during exams Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Exceptional Leave Approved: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Reasons:	
Authorised <input type="checkbox"/>	Approved for school days	
Unauthorised <input type="checkbox"/>	Not approved for school days	
Signature	Print Name	Position/Job Role
Date		