



Long Lane Church of England Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Principals

Staff and governors at Long Lane Church of England Primary School believe that promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through a broad and balanced curriculum. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Some children may be reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that the attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

This policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to Education Welfare.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day which shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified as **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not the parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Examples of Authorised absences

- Genuine illness of a pupil
- A medical appointment which can only be arranged in school time
- An emergency (e.g. bereavement)
- Transport issues – strike action
- Religious holidays

Examples of Unauthorised absences

- Holidays
- Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park/a birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late night
- Appointments for other family members
- Looking after relatives or other siblings



Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the Head Teacher and staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the **Education Welfare Officer** from the Local Authority's Multi Agency Team.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty is contained within the **Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices** (See Appendix A).

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact Education Welfare themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their contact number is 01629 533 650.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- When children are absent from school, parents should telephone the school office and report the reason for the absence before the start of the school day and no later than 09.15am.
- If a telephone call is not received, the school will contact parents by telephone, requesting contact is made to the school. Notes will be kept of attempts to contact.
- On returning to school a note needs to be presented to cover the full period of absence.
- If pupils arrive late in school, parents must report to the office to be signed in with a valid reason (as determined by the Head Teacher), as to why they are late.
- When an individual pupil's attendance falls **below 85%** in any term without good reason, a referral to Education Welfare will be made by the school. The school will contact parents, by phone and by letter, when an individual pupil's attendance begins to cause a concern and before it falls to 85%. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Holidays during Term Time

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school sessions/days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Clearly there are many situations which may constitute exceptional circumstances, but as a generality the school will interpret '**exceptional**' in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of



teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about an individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

Please support the school in adhering to these new regulations. However, if you do need to take your child out of school during term time, you must make it very clear in your request how the circumstances are exceptions. If this is not clear, under the new legislation the school will not be allowed to grant leave.

Attendance Targets

The school has adopted the following targets and set its own target of 96% (or above) as a whole.

Excellent Attendance = 100%

Good Attendance = 99%-95%

Satisfactory Attendance = 94%-90%

Unsatisfactory Attendance = 89%-85%

Serious Concern = Below 85%

Safeguarding Procedures

The school telephone has a messaging facility and messages should be left if no-one is available to answer when parents phone to report absences. The school will contact parents on any day that a registered pupil is absent without explanation, including the cases where pupils have registered but then do not appear in lessons.

If the school cannot ensure that the child is safe then they will contact the police as well as the parents.

If it is anticipated that a pupil will miss a period of school time, a **Request for Leave during Term Time form** must be completed and signed. Parents must ensure this is handed into the school office so that Safeguarding procedures are adhered to. The forms are available from the school office.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a student is stopped by the Police or if a parent or carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. In accordance with guidance from Derbyshire County Council and the Department of Education, holidays during term time will not be automatically authorised and only authorised in exceptional circumstances as previously stated.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.



- Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one notice per parent of a pupil per academic year¹.
- In cases where there is more than one poorly attending pupil in a family, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of following criteria are met:

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the current and previous term. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- Unauthorised absences of a least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to a leave of absence (including holiday related) in term time not agreed by the Headteacher of children whose attendance is already below 87% in the current academic year or the previous academic term.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current and previous term. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of late arrival.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. School staff are committed to working with parents as this is the best way to ensure a high level of attendance as possible.

Regular Lateness = Absence

Over a school year:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days absent

15 minutes late every day = 10 days absent

30 minutes late every day = 19 days absent

Regular Attendance = Increase Attainment

Over a school year:

90% attendance = 19 days absent

85% attendance = 29 days absent

80% attendance = 38 days absent

75% attendance = 47 days absent

Promotion of good attendance

¹ Continued poor attendance in the same academic year can be addressed by other statutory actions available to the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996.



The school recognises pupils who consistently attend school and therefore have good attendance figures. Awards (Bronze, Silver and Gold) are given at the end of each term to celebrate those who have achieved 100% attendance. At the end of the year, pupils who have achieved 100% attendance are awarded a book of their choice for their achievement.

Accepted by Governors on March 7th 2017

To be reviewed March 2018

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