



Attendance Policy

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ISAIAH 40:31

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles."

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

School must be provided with all current contact details and parents must inform the school of any changes regarding changes to the address, telephone number, emergency contact details.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:30am. Any student who attends school after the register closes will be coded as a U code which equates to an unauthorised absence.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm. School closes at 3:15pm and parents must collect or arrange for their child to be collected at this time. If any parent is delayed due to an emergency they must contact the school office to inform us of the delay and what time they anticipate arrival. If parents wish to arrange for another adult to collect their child instead, they must inform the school office in advance, giving the name of the other adult who will be collecting.

3.2 Unplanned absence - ILLNESS

Parents must notify the school on the first day, and all subsequent days, of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Calls should be made to the school office on 01509 263430. Messages may also be left on this number, by selecting 'option 1' and leaving a voicemail.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please call the school office on 01509 263430 to advise us of any medical or dental appointments or send details in writing to school with your child to pass onto their class teacher.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as a U code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

At Loughborough C of E Primary School, we share a child's attendance record with parents through the annual end of year written report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence /holiday to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion
- if a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance. However, this will need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer (this letter must be on that company's official headed notepaper). A request of this nature will not be considered without one, and repeat requests of this kind will not be granted
- a short absence to attend to family illness (in this country or abroad)

However, to have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance and permission will not be granted. Unless a request is made **at least two weeks in advance from the first day of requested absence**, and meets one of the above criteria it will not be considered for authorisation.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance (maximum 2 days) – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

4.2 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want all children to enjoy school and love learning at Loughborough C of E Primary School. We invite all parents experiencing difficulties with school attendance for their children, to contact us as early as possible when a problem is identified, so that a shared strategy can be put in place.

Some children, either due to a change of circumstances at home or at school, experience high levels of anxiety in the morning before school. This is a normal response to anxiety, and can often be supported effectively at school until the anxiety subsides. Our Learning Mentors for example, can arrange short term 'Meet and Greet' plans to help pupils with separation from parents during a transition period.

We are keen to acknowledge positive improvements in attendance where issues have previously been identified, and reward these improvements in an appropriate way such as a special event or trip.

6. Attendance monitoring

The learning mentors monitor pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school by 9am in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to notify the school on the first day and every following day of absence.

The headteacher will monitor absence percentages on a regular basis and will address concerns in writing to parents. [Appendix 2] Where pupils are in danger of being classified as a persistent absentee (where a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%), an appointment will be arranged with parents by the headteacher and targets for attendance will be set for the following 8 weeks.

If targets for attendance are then not met, the headteacher will make a referral through Education Welfare Services Midlands (EWSM). The Education Welfare Officer will then make contact with parents and an attendance case will be activated.

The headteacher may also reserve the right to make a referral to First Response (Social Services), should it be judged that the persistent absence signals a safeguarding concern.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors. We analyse our attendance data to help us to identify particular groups of children whose absence is a cause for concern and we monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Missing Children

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the **headteacher**.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil being identified as missing whilst at school:

The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **headteacher, or member of the SLT**, immediately.

The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.

A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the **headteacher**.

The following areas will be systematically searched:

- **All classrooms**
- **All toilets**
- **The library, music room, studio, school hall, offices and PPA room**
- **Any outbuildings**
- **The school grounds**

Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

If the pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.

If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.

The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked after child, or has any special educational needs, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

The **headteacher** will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The **headteacher** will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed.

A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice based on the evidence provided by the Education Welfare Officer regarding a child's non school attendance.

8.3 The Education Welfare Officer

Loughborough C of E Primary School has chosen to work with Education Welfare Services Midlands (EWSM). Referrals for attendance casework will be made to them by the headteacher.

The Education Welfare Officer:

- Carries out home visits on behalf of the school
- Attends meetings held in school when invited to attend
- Meets with the headteacher and other staff as appropriate to discuss attendance on a termly basis
- Works with external agencies on behalf of the school if related to an attendance or welfare concern
- Carries out preparation work for any cases for Penalty Notices/Prosecution submitted to the Local Authority
- Provides legal services support work for cases proceeding to prosecution stage.
- Follows up any Missing Children or Safeguarding issues when referrals are made to them by the school

8.4 The learning mentor

The learning mentor:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

8.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

8.6 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8.7 Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child/children attends school regularly and arrives and is collected on time
- Advising school by 9am of any illness or unplanned absence and the reasons for this absence
- Providing school in advance of any information regarding medical or dental appointments
- Requesting authorized or term time leave of absence/holiday **at least two weeks in advance** in writing
- Providing school with all current contact details (including at least two emergency contact telephone numbers) and informing the school of any changes regarding address, telephone number or emergency contact details.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 Years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: First formal attendance concern letter

To the Parents/Carers of

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

As part of our ongoing monitoring we review attendance daily and I am writing to you regarding your child's current attendance which is a concern.

Your child's current attendance from / / to / / is%

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and Maths whereas 73% of pupils who attend school for 95% of the time achieve this.

Clearly this data is from Key Stage 4, **but good attendance should start at primary school**. The staff and governors of Loughborough C of E Primary recognise that the earlier schools address attendance 'issues' the less likely it is that they will become a long-term issue.

To contextualise absence:

1 day off per school year = 99.5% attendance

10 days off per school year = 94.7% attendance

20 days off per school year = 90% attendance

90% attendance = 4 whole weeks off school during the school year

90% attendance throughout year's 1 - 6 = half a year off school

90% attendance for a child through Primary and Secondary school means they will have missed a significant amount of their education.

We appreciate that some absence is unavoidable, for a variety of reasons. If I can help support you with your child's attendance in any way then please make an appointment with myself. Sometimes the simplest solution can make the difference. Please be assured that we will continue to monitor attendance closely. A copy of the schools' attendance policy is available from the school office or on the school website.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Janine Stillwell

Headteacher

Appendix 3: Second formal attendance concern letter

To the Parents/Carers of

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

As part of our ongoing monitoring we review attendance daily and I am writing to you regarding your child's current attendance as they are in danger of meeting the threshold for persistent absence (Below 90%), unless action is taken to address non-attendance.

Your child's current attendance from / / to / / is%

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and Maths whereas 73% of pupils who attend school for 95% of the time achieve this. Clearly this data is from Key Stage 4, but **good attendance should start at primary school.**

The staff and governors of Loughborough C of E Primary recognise that the earlier schools address attendance 'issues' the less likely it is that they will become a long-term issue.

To contextualise absence:

1 day off per school year = 99.5% attendance

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20 days off per school year = 90% attendance

90% attendance = 4 whole weeks off school during the school year

90% attendance throughout year's 1 - 6 = half a year off school

90% attendance for a child through Primary and Secondary school means they will have missed a significant amount of their education.

We appreciate that some absence is unavoidable, for a variety of reasons, however your child's attendance is a concern to us currently. Please contact the school office to make an appointment with myself to discuss this further, so that we can set targets for attendance moving forward and to see if we can offer any support.

I take this opportunity to warn you that if you fail to attend this appointment, and your child's absence does not improve, I may decide to make a referral to an education welfare officer, through Education Welfare Services Midlands (EWSM). You would then be required to attend a formal attendance panel meeting with myself and the education welfare officer. I also reserve the right to make a referral to First Response (Social Services), should I judge that the persistent absence provides evidence of a safeguarding concern.

I must also inform you following an attendance panel meeting, that if persistent absence continues you may incur penalty notices and fines of up to £120 from Leicestershire Local Authority.

If you have any questions regarding our attendance policy, a copy can be found on the school website, or a paper copy is available from the school office by request. Please call the school office to arrange an appointment to see me at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Janine Stillwell, Headteacher