



Leverton Primary School
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed:	October 2019
By:	SLT
Ratified by Governors:	October 2019
Next Review	October 2020

AIM OF THE SCHOOLS

The aim of Leverton Primary School is to provide an excellent education in a safe, supportive learning environment, where people are valued and make positive contributions to the school community, and where pupils go on to become responsible, independent members of society.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

We recognise the importance of regular school attendance and the impact this has on learning.

We believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. In addition, we consider it vitally important that children arrive at school on time.

Education provides a means of enhancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines the educational process and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

For these reasons, it is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher, not the parent / carer who can authorise the absence.

High levels of attendance are the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age, from nursery through primary and in to secondary is essential, helping your children to adapt to adult life. It is for that reason we expect all those on our roll, irrespective of statutory school age to attend school regularly as per the rules set out in this document.

ANY absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling, and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and can affect the learning of others in the same class. Not just this, but there is increasing documentation that supports the notion that poor attendance can heighten a child's apprehension in relation to school.

How does irregular attendance affect children?

- Children fall behind in school work, and struggle to keep up which effects their enjoyment of learning and of school.
- This affects their motivation, which can lead to poor behaviour and affects their desire to come to school.
- This impacts their ability to make and keep friends which in turn affects their confidence.
- They also miss out on extra-curricular opportunities and experiences

It is for these reasons we want to work in partnership to ensure our children get the best out of school, we therefore need everyone's support, particularly the support and encouragement of parent / carers to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance for our children.

This policy is therefore put in place to assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality so that they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

It is for these reasons we celebrate good attendance.

Rewards and Celebrations

- Each term, children are named in assembly if they have 100% attendance for that term. They receive a certificate. At the end of the year, if they still have 100% attendance, they receive a reward.

Evaluation and Review

To ensure good practice continues we will evaluate and review our policy annually.

- The policy will be reviewed each September.
- The Headteacher is informed about attendance issues and reports to governors.
- There is a lead Governor for attendance and it is discussed at School Governors meetings.

School Attendance and The Law

School Attendance

Information from the Local Authority – Attendance Compliance Team

Legal information for Parents and Carers

The Education Act 1996

By law – all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude or any special educational needs they may have. The school starting date is the beginning of the term after which the child reaches their 5th birthday.

Parents / Carers – are responsible for

- registering their child at a school or making other arrangements which provide an efficient education
- ensuring their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered
- applying for a planned absence of leave from school

- notifying the school when their child is absent unexpectedly by phone or through an email via the school app or school website.

Schools – must either

- give permission for your child to be absent from school and mark the absence as authorised
- or**
- mark the absence as unauthorised

The Law –says that parents/carers whose children are absent from school without good reason are committing an offence.

Next steps

If your child accrues further unauthorised absences, a referral may be made to the Local Authority. Depending upon the circumstances, one, or a combination, of the following may be initiated:

Invited to respond to a Parental Response Questionnaire

You may be sent a questionnaire which requires a response from you. This questionnaire gives you the opportunity to provide the Local Authority of any details regarding your child's unauthorised absence from school and to provide supporting evidence in your defence.

Issued with a Penalty Notice

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child for the sum of £60 to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within this time it will increase to £120 which must be paid within the following 7 days (a total of 28 days from issue). If the higher payment is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings. There is no right of appeal and payment will not be accepted after the 28th day.

Prosecution

Depending upon the circumstances, a prosecution may be initiated without a Penalty Notice being issued first, or if you have failed to pay a Penalty Notice. Prosecutions take place in the magistrate's court under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This offence carries a fine of up to £1000 for each parent.

Or

In the magistrate's court under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. This offence carries a fine up to £2,500 and/or a 3 months custodial sentence for each parent if it is found that you knew about your child's absences and failed, without reasonable justification, to ensure attendance.

If you fail to attend court for the hearing the matter may either be dealt with in your absence or, occasionally, a warrant issued for your arrest. If found guilty, the magistrates will sentence you in accordance with their sentencing powers.

The magistrates may also consider imposing a Parenting Order which consists of two elements: a core element requiring the parent to attend guidance sessions to help them in dealing with their children and a control element requiring a parent to exercise control over ensuring attendance and communicate with the relevant authorities.

Education Supervision Order (ESO)

If the Local Authority assess that an Education Supervision Order is the most appropriate course of action, an application will be made through the family court under the Children Act 1989 section 36. Such an order placed upon your child allows a supervising officer, appointed by the court, to provide advice, guidance and give directions to you and/or your child aimed at ensuring regular school attendance. If you do not comply with a reasonable direction you may be prosecuted for breaching the Order and you may also be prosecuted for failing to ensure regular school attendance

Defences to non-school attendance

The legal reasons (defences) for non-school attendance are –

- the child is prevented from attending school due to sickness or other unplanned or unavoidable causes
- the child is absent due to a day of religious observance in the parent's/carer's religion
- the school has granted and authorised the leave
- the child lives more than 2 miles if under 8 years or 3 miles if over 8 years from the school and the local authority has failed to provide transport.

It is not a defence where parents have chosen to register a child at a school outside the catchment area and no transport has been provided.

For more information regarding Penalty Notices, please refer to the Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices:

https://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Attending-School/Documents/Essex_code_of_conduct.pdf

Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

The Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is ***'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'***. Children are expected to attend every session. It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is only the headteacher and his / her designate (not the Local Authority) who can authorise absence.

Parent / Carers

- If your child is absent, you are required to notify the school office no later than 8.45am on the day of absence.
- Absences can be reported either by telephoning 01992 715885 and speaking to a member of staff, by completing the form on our website.
- Parent / Carers are expected to put in writing details of their child's absence, including a full explanation, detailing symptoms, any medication taken and whether they were taken to the Doctor's. "Unwell" is not sufficient. This should be provided to the school on the day they return. Failure to do so may lead to the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- However, if you write on the website, this is considered written confirmation. Written confirmation does not however guarantee the absence will be authorised.
- Medical / dental appointments are expected to be made outside of school time. However, when this is not possible, appointment cards should be readily provided to enable the school to authorise the absence. If this is not provided, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Parent / carers should notify the school office in advance of an appointment, notifying the class teacher is not sufficient in itself.

- If your child has unacceptable levels of absence, we may request medical evidence (such as a doctor's note, appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all illness related absences. Failure to provide such medical evidence will result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised and a referral to the Local Authority will be considered.
- Parent / Carers are expected to provide a doctor's fit note for all absences over one week for the school to authorise the absence.
- Leave of absence must only be requested if there are exceptional circumstances and must be requested using the schools official form from the school office. They must be submitted giving sufficient notice to enable the school to consider the application and provide a written response to the request. The school can take up to two weeks to consider a request. Family holidays will NOT be authorised under any circumstances and is irrespective of a child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or his / her designate (not the Local Authority) may authorise such a request.
- Should a parent / carer remove a child where leave of absence was refused or where no application was made, the school may request the issue of a Penalty Notice.
- Parent / carers are expected to work with the school and / or the Local Authority to resolve any attendance issues.
- Parent / carers should ensure children arrive promptly and their children are in class for 8.50 for KS1 and 8.45am for KS2.
- Should you know that your child will be late; you should contact the school office immediately and give them an estimated time of arrival as well as inform them of whether or not they will be having a school meal, so this can be ordered for them.
- Parent / carers are expected to ensure the school office is provided with up to date contact details of at least two or three emergency contacts.
- Parent / carers should not keep children off school due to a grievance with the school / a member of staff. The school expects children to attend, and adults to engage in communication with the school to solve problems.

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend regularly and punctually.
- They are expected to be in class for 8.50am for KS1 and 8.45am for KS2.
- Should they arrive after doors have closed, they are expected to report to the school office with a parent / carer to sign in.
- Frequent late arrival is unacceptable and will be dealt with.

School

- 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. Schools must take the attendance register at the start of each school day, and once during the second session.
- Every amendment made to the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. Every entry will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- Registration is taken in class first thing in the morning and after lunch break. Registration is recorded using the SIMS programme, using the codes set out in Appendix B.
- Children arriving after the doors have closed are then required to report with parent / carers to the school office to be signed in as late.
- The SIMS register is then updated with either an L code if they sign in before 9.15am, or a U code if they arrive after 9.15am by the school office.
- The time that a child arrives and the reason is also recorded on SIMS.

- If a child is regularly late after registration has closed, the school will consider a referral to the Local Authority.
- Once registration in class is taken, and all late children and absences have been recorded on SIMS, the school office will contact all parent / carers where a child is absent and no reason for the absence has been provided.
- The school office will first try telephoning the first point of contact and if there is no response and there is the facility, will leave a voicemail. A text message will then be sent explaining their child is absent and is marked as being unauthorised please contact the school office immediately. Should no response be made within a reasonable amount of time the school will try the next contacts.
- If the school office is unable to obtain a valid / satisfactory reason for absence, the absence will remain unauthorised until one is provided.
- The school reserves the right to unauthorise any absence and will indicate on the electronic register using the appropriate code whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. (See Appendix B)
- If we are unable to make contact, and are concerned for your child's welfare, then we may contact the Local Authority or Social Care.
- Attendance and Punctuality is monitored closely, and we will contact parents / carers if there are any concerns.
- The school will also provide attendance reports at parent evenings, where necessary and in annual reports, in order to keep parents abreast of their child's attendance and to support our culture whereby attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community; parent/carers, pupils, governors and all school staff.
- We offer support from the school's Learning Mentor for both children and parents/carers.
- We will involve the Local Authority if parents / carers fail to support the school in ensuring the fullest possible attendance of their children.
- The school will consider each leave of absence on a case-by-case basis, and only if they are submitted in advance using the correct school form
- Leave of absence will only be authorised should the Headteacher consider there to be exceptional circumstances.
- Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests for leave of absence on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that **requests will normally be refused**.
- Family holidays will NOT be authorised under any circumstances, irrespective of the child's overall attendance.
- Only the Headteacher or his/her designate (not the Local Authority) may authorise leave of absence requests.
- In response to a leave of absence request, the school will send a written response to parents/carers within two weeks of receiving the application.
- Where a leave of absence was refused, or where no application was made, the school may request the issue of a Penalty Notice.
- With effect from October 2017, due to the importance of pupils settling in to school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions (3 school days) of unauthorised absence during the first two weeks of September.
- 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.

- 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 attendance officer monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil levels; reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher; works with the Local Authority to tackle any attendance concerns; arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both the morning registration and the afternoon, using the correct codes and submitting this to the school office promptly.
- The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the attendance policy, registration process, regulations and the law.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are continually monitored by the school. The school expects children to attend every day. Should a child's attendance hit 95%, the school considers this a cause for concern.

The persistent absentee threshold is 90%. This threshold is set by the government and is regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence. Absence at this level causes significant damage to any child's education and full support from parents/carers is expected to prevent this.

If your child hits this threshold, a letter will be sent informing you of this, and you may be invited in for a meeting. If a child's attendance then continues to deteriorate, you will be required to attend a meeting at school, and each parent / carer may be issued with a Legal Action Warning Letter. Medical evidence will be requested in support of absences due to illness, and the reasons for poor attendance will be discussed and considered.

Following this meeting, if attendance does not improve significantly, the school will consider a referral to the Local Authority.

If the school feels that parent / carers are not sufficiently supporting the school i.e. by not following the rules set out in this policy, regardless of a meeting taking place or not, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Punctuality.

Every time a child is late, parent / carers are required to sign them in at the school office. The occasion, reason and minutes late are recorded for every student on every occasion. This is then monitored, and if you and your child are consistently late, or the number of minutes late are considered excessive and are without a valid reason, you will be sent a letter and asked to attend a meeting to discuss ways to make a improvement and this will be monitored.

We understand that on occasions, late arrival at school can be unavoidable. However, when lateness is more frequent the child concerned may become apprehensive and will miss valuable learning time.

Lateness is coded as set out in this policy, and any child who is late after registration closes will receive an unauthorised late mark. If a child's lateness is persistent we reserve the right to mark them as unauthorised late.

The school aims to work actively with parents / carers to ensure a child's attendance and punctuality has little negative impact on their education.

The Local Authority

The school work closely with the Local Authority, and this relationship is crucial in any attempts to improve attendance. They are committed to the principle that all children have the right to a suitable education and regular school attendance is vital to enable young people to achieve their ambitions through education, training and life-long learning.

If school interventions have not improved a child's attendance and / or punctuality, a referral can be made to the Local Authority. They provide a structured response where legal intervention, in the form of Penalty Notices, Prosecution or an Education Supervision order is deemed necessary. School Attendance Orders are also issued when children are not on a school roll or are not in receipt of a suitable education.

This policy also links with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and should be consulted in conjunction with these policies.

APPENDIX A

CATEGORISING ATTENDANCE

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
Unsatisfactory	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 days	25	125
Serious Cause for Concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190

APPENDIX B

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, Local Authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

COD E	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/descriptor)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	
T	Traveller absence	
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit of trip	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work experience	
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	
#	School closed to pupils	

APPENDIX C

SEE ESSEX CODE OF CONDUCT

https://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Attending-School/Documents/Essex_code_of_conduct.pdf

Appendix D

Leave of Absence Form