

Lanesfield Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2024

Review Date: September 2027



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction

This policy was developed and agreed by the Governing Board and has the full agreement of the whole school community including the Education Welfare Service and MAST team.

Aims

- To comply with the legal requirements of the Education Act 1996
- To monitor and identify patterns in individual children's attendance and punctuality throughout the year, pinpointing irregularities and cause for concern.
- To endeavour to provide support and guidance where appropriate to improve children's attendance and punctuality.
- To provide information on which to base target setting for future attendance returns.
- To provide evidence and information for reporting to Parents/Carers, Governing body, LA and DFE.
- To ensure each child has full access to all areas of the curriculum and the education they are entitled to.
- To improve attendance to a minimum of 97% and reduce lateness.

Whole School Involvement

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the staff. However, in order to achieve aims, specific staff are involved in the implementation of this policy. These include; Class Teachers and Learning Support, Children, Parents/Carers, School Administration Staff, Head teacher and Senior leadership Team, along with Education Welfare Service and School Governors.

The Legal Position

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude.

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the first term once the child has turned 5 Years of age.

If it appears that a child is not receiving suitable education, then under section 437 of the Education Act, the LA / School must begin procedures for issuing a penalty notice or commencing legal action.

Since March 2001 a higher offence warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court. Prosecution under section 444(1A) can lead to a custodial sentence.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are;

The Head Teacher (Z Rollinson)

Attendance Administrator (D Martin)

C Green (external support)

EWO support will be accessible for statutory duties.

Registers

Registers are STATUTORY LEGAL DOCUMENTS, which must be completed accurately by a member of teaching staff. Attendance registers are taken twice a day: at the start of the morning session and afternoon sessions. Registers should be completed and 'saved' by 9.00am and 1.00pm.

Instructions for completing registers must be followed. The office staff will find out the reason for absences and enter the correct code. If they are in any doubt they will contact the Headteacher for clarification.

Absences

Absences can only be authorised once the attendance team or Head teacher are satisfied that an acceptable explanation has been provided by the parent/carer regarding the absence. It is important that absences can only be authorised by the school and not by the parent/carer.

If a member of staff is in doubt about whether an absence should be authorised, this should be referred to the Head teacher.

If a valid reason is given verbally or in writing by a Parent/Carer, then the absence may be authorised. If the reason is unacceptable or not validated, then it should be referred to attendance staff to investigate further.

Procedures for Authorising Absence

- Parents are required to contact school on 558950 before 08.45am on the first day of absence to confirm the reason of absence and its' likely

duration. This can also be done via email using the email address specifically for parents: parents@lanesfieldprimary.co.uk.

- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been supplied, parents will be contacted to clarify the reason for absence.
- If a child is not in school, no contact has been made or is persistently absent, they may receive a door knock to establish the reason for not attending school.
- Parents who routinely fail to make contact with the school will have all absences unauthorised and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.
- If an absent child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or is a Child in Need attendance staff should inform Head teacher immediately that the child is absent.

Acceptable Reason for Absence

- Illness (evidence may be asked for)
- Days agreed by school as Religious observance
- Clear 24-hour period following vomiting and/or diarrhoea

Unacceptable Reasons for Absence

- Truancy (absence without knowledge of Parents/Carers)
- Minding the House
- Shopping/running errands (e.g. buying new shoes clothes)
- Looking after sick relatives
- Looking after brothers or sisters
- School clothing in the wash
- Oversleeping
- Head lice
- Birthday
- Parent's illness
- Children in another school on an Inset Day
- Last day of term
- Child tells the parent/carer that they do not want to go to school
- Holiday: whole weeks and odd days
- Routine medical and dental appointments are discouraged in school time
- Any other reason that the Head Teacher deems unacceptable

Leave During Term Time

Parents/Carers do not have the right to take children out of school in term time. Children should only be taken out of school in term time for exceptional circumstances. Holidays in term time are not considered exceptional circumstances.

We believe that every session missed from school is a missed opportunity for children to learn from a new experience. Learning is a process and if a child misses a step, the next step of learning becomes much more difficult.

If you wish to apply for a leave of absence, you must complete a form from the office at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the absence.

Lanesfield School will not authorise any leave of absence that is requested because of holiday.

Any leave of absence 5 days or over for a family holiday will result in a fixed penalty notice being issued, irrespective of the child's current attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

- All children's attendance figures will be checked twice a term for children under 93%.
- Attendance staff will meet regularly to analyse attendance patterns
- Individual and whole school attendance, punctuality figures discussed and ways forward suggested.
- Children causing concern will be discussed along with actions taken and progress towards targets.
- All parents receive a letter if attendance falls below 90%.
- Children with attendance less than 90% are identified as causing concern
- Children who are regularly late are also identified as causing concern

Procedures for when attendance is causing concern

- In the first instance, a letter will be sent home notifying parents/carers that their child's attendance has dropped below 90%. Letter will request medical evidence for all absences. This happens every half term.
- Where attendance continues to be a concern, parents will be invited in for a meeting in person or via telephone call. This will be held with EWO (CG) whereby a parent contract will be discussed/completed. If meeting is held by telephone, letter will be sent to parent with copy of contract.
- Further deterioration in attendance could lead to a further meeting which may include the Head Teacher and Attendance worker. The Parenting Agreement will be reviewed and an Early Help Assessment will be offered.

- The pupil's attendance/punctuality will be closely monitored until it is no longer a concern.
- The Attendance Officer will ask to meet with parents and school along with other any other professionals, such as the school nurse, to discuss absence issues.
- If parents/carers fail to attend meetings to discuss attendance issues and attendance or punctuality does not improve within a specific time, a Penalty Notice could be served.

Mandatory Guidance introduced by the Department for Education

From 19th August 2024, the Department for Education have significantly toughened the law in relation to school attendance and have now published revised guidance that is mandatory.

Schools need to consider a Penalty Notice if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Half of a day (am or pm) is considered as a 'session'. The threshold of 10 sessions can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, for example, eight sessions of unauthorised holidays in term time and two sessions for other unauthorised reasons. The 10-week period may span different terms or school years, for example: 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 in the Autumn term.

Penalty Notices (fines) charged to parents have risen to £80 (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (if paid within between 22 and 28 days). Where a penalty notice is unpaid, legal action is pursued. Under the new framework, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period. Where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child, the charge will be £160, this is a flat penalty for a second notice and is not reduced for paying early.

If a third offence is committed within a 3-year rolling period, legal action/prosecution would be considered. School attendance is a high priority for everyone. The Local Authority and schools are committed to improving attendance and achievement and would like parents/carers to work with us to ensure the best possible outcomes for their children.

At Lanesfield, we are passionate about our children's attendance and know that attending school is the most effective way to improve their life chances and future opportunities.

The full guidance from the DFE can be found online: Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK.

Lateness

Late arrivals to school are an unauthorised absence. The school day begins between 8.30 am and 8.40am and the register closes at 9.00am. Children who are late with a valid reason will be authorised with an 'L' code. If a legitimate reason is not given, an 'O' code for an unauthorised absence may be given. Where the "O" code is used, the child does not receive a mark for the session.

Where a child is consistently late over a number of weeks, parents will receive a letter or invited to a meeting to discuss why their child is late and ask for cooperation in rectifying the situation.

Celebrating Good Attendance

- At Lanesfield Primary School one of our aims is to become an attendance HERO (Here Every day Ready On-Time)
- Class teachers are encouraged to praise individual and class attendance regularly.
- Attendance staff will regularly report attendance to other school staff to raise awareness and encourage good attendance.
- Weekly attendance is celebrated with the HERO bear going to the best class. Top attendance classes are shared on the school newsletter.
- Children who have had 100% attendance for a whole term will receive a coloured wristband. Bronze for Autumn, Silver for Spring and Gold for Summer. They will also be awarded with a certificate.
- Children who achieve 100% for a whole school year will be presented with a gold pin badge.
- Improved attendance is also celebrated through letters sent home to parents.

Setting Targets

The Local Authority sets target for all schools based upon past performance and national expectations. However, the DfE and OFSTED have specific targets which place schools into national categories and tables which will be published for parental scrutiny each year.

Race Equality and Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to a full education regardless of their gender, disability or ability. We are committed to providing a safe and happy school

free from racist intimidation or harassment of any kind and for all our children to achieve their full potential.

Reporting Attendance

Attendance is reported to pupil and parents in a variety of ways:

- Annually on the annual written report
- Termly at parent consultations
- Through ongoing intervention throughout the year
- By publishing attendance and punctuality results in the school Newsletter.

Information is transferred to other schools by way of:

- Electronic data systems
- Common Transfer forms
- National Curriculum assessment records
- Passing on of annual reports.

The school is required to make attendance returns to the DfE and the LA

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher should:

- Ensure legal requirements are being met with regard to attendance and punctuality.
- Be responsible for the operational management of the attendance policy.
- Review policy and procedures at least annually with all staff.
- Discuss attendance and punctuality with new Parents/Carers and children.
- Analyse authorised and unauthorised absence regularly with attendance staff and EWO to discuss any attendance issues.
- Reward and celebrate attendance.
- Send letters home regarding attendance and lateness.
- Identify and monitor individual absences and lateness, identifying patterns and trends and target improvements.
- Make the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy available to parents.
- Hold regular meetings to address attendance issues and implement strategies to increase attendance and reduce Persistent Absence.

The Governing Board should:

- Know and understand the school's policy and procedures for absence and lateness
- Have a designated governor responsible for monitoring and supporting the school with attendance and punctuality. Our designated governor is Mr Farrell.

Attendance Staff Should:

- Monitor individual attendance and lateness daily, identifying any patterns and absences.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher regarding absence and lateness.
- Produce reports for the Headteacher and Governors summarising individual and whole school attendance.
- Communicate with Parents/Carers on attendance and punctuality.
- Record minutes of meetings held with parents regarding attendance.
- Record and store contact with parents in an appropriate manner.
- Follow up data and reports with regard to less than 93% attendance.
- Follow up poor punctuality and communicate with parents and children to identify solutions.
- Hold regular meetings with Head regarding attendance.

Class teachers should:

- Ensure that registers are completed in accordance with Attendance and Punctuality procedures.
- Pass any written letters received from parents/cares regarding lateness or attendance to attendance staff to add to Arbor.
- Record any verbal messages from Parents/Carers regarding attendance or lateness on Arbor with a record of who shared message.
- Raise any concerns regarding attendance or lateness with attendance staff.
- Complete register by 9:00am and 1:30pm and ensuring they have been saved on Arbor.

Parents and Carers should:

- Ensure children attend school on time every day.
- Report any absences due to sickness in the correct way. Provide evidence where this has been requested.
- Inform school of any changes in family circumstances particularly new addresses or telephone numbers.

Summary:

Lanesfield has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents/carers the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible, please work with us.