



Linslade Lower School

Attendance Policy

Governor Approval: January 2021
Review Cycle: Triennial

Policy review chronology:

January 2018	3.6 government definition of persistent absence has changed from 15% to 10%	Approved
January 2021	No changes	Approved

LINSLADE LOWER SCHOOL

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE

1.0 Rationale

We recognise that good attendance and punctuality are central to achieving the best from the education available at school. We know that from time to time pupils may suffer from minor illnesses and some pupils may have medical conditions that necessitate time away from school. However, we acknowledge the clear link between poor attendance and low achievement and believe that families, the school and the education welfare service all have a part to play in challenging poor attendance and establishing and maintaining good levels of attendance for all pupils. It is through working in partnership that we can achieve our best for the pupils.

1.1 Legal Framework

Attendance is subject to a legal framework:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment) 2010
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment) 2011
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment) 2013

1.2 Purpose

This policy sets out clearly the role and responsibilities of families, the school and the education welfare service as well as the schools systems for monitoring attendance and recognising excellent attendance.

1.3 The person with specific responsibility for this policy is: Mrs Hazel Farlam.

2.0 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Responsibilities of families

Parents¹ are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at school at the required times.

The parent is primarily responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. However, where school attendance problems occur, the key to resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the parent, the school and the Local Authority.

Parents should:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly
- Ensure they are punctual for school
- Ensure they are appropriately dressed and in a condition to learn
- Comply with the attendance policy
- Make sure their child understands the reasons for good attendance and punctuality
- Make sure appointments are made outside of school hours wherever possible and show evidence of the appointment when it is not
- Notify the school when their child is absent as soon as possible, preferably on the first day
- Only allow absence from school for legitimate reasons
- Work in partnership with the school

¹ The term 'parent' includes those who have parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act 1989 and as defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. The latter gives 'parental responsibility' to those who may not be the child's actual parents but have day to day care of the child.

2.2 Responsibilities of schools

The school will:

- Have a registration system that is accurate, informative and understood
- Have clear written guidance for parents
- Promote good attendance and punctuality for all
- Ensure that attendance and punctuality have a high profile in the communications with parents
- Follow up unexplained absences promptly
- Inform parents of their child's attendance in the annual school report.
- Analyse data regularly and identify the actions that need to be taken
- Work in partnership with families and the education welfare service
- Monitor the effectiveness of the attendance policy.

The school systems are maintained by the office manager. The headteacher is responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy.

2.3 Responsibilities of the Access and Inclusion Team

The Access and inclusion team will:

- Monitor registers regularly
- Identify pupils/families with attendance difficulties
- Agree time limited action which needs to be taken by the school or school attendance officer
- Feedback on the progress of cases and exchange of information
- Issue penalty notices where applicable
- Provide advice to the school
- Work in partnership with the school and families

3.0 School procedures

The law requires schools to record attendance once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The registers must show whether absence is authorised or unauthorised and record the nature of approved educational activities.

3.1 Timing of the school day:

	Start	Register taken	Register returned to office	Register closes	Session ends
Morning Nursery	8.45	8.50	9.05	9.15	11.45
Morning Reception	8.45	8.50	9.05	9.15	11.45
Morning Key Stage 1	8.55	8.55	9.05	9.15	12.15
Morning Key Stage 2	8.55	8.55	9.05	9.15	12.25
Afternoon Nursery	12.30	12.35	12.35	12.35	3.30
Afternoon Reception	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15	3.30
Afternoon Key Stage 1	1.30	1.25	1.30	1.30	3.30

Afternoon Key Stage 2	1.30	1.25	1.30	1.30	3.30
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The registers are taken at the beginning of each session; therefore there are two marks for each day.

The school follows the Local Authority registration regulations.

Guidelines for marking the register are in appendix 2.

3.2 Punctuality

Punctuality is very important at the beginning and end of the school day. Children who arrive after 8.55am or 1.30pm are late (marked L), children arriving after 9.15am or 1.30pm are marked (U), a reason for lateness will be entered into the late book. Children who arrive after 9.15am or 1.30pm will not receive an attendance mark. Lateness is monitored and where a pattern emerges action will be taken (appendix 3).

3.3 Absence from school

Children must be present at both registrations to get full attendance for the day. Absence can be recorded as authorised or unauthorised, this means:

- **Authorised**
Absence for which a valid reason has been given e.g. illness, medical appointment (appointment card seen)
- **Unauthorised**
Absence for which an invalid reason has been given e.g. shopping, visiting relatives, birthday etc

When a child is absent the parent needs to inform the school as soon as possible preferably by telephone call followed up with a letter on the child's return.

3.4 Medical appointments

If a child needs to attend a medical appointment during the school day the parent should inform the school in advance and show the letter or appointment card as evidence. If a child has a medical condition requiring frequent medical appointments this will be logged on their school record.

3.4 Religious observance

Under the regulations, schools must authorise absence that is due to religious observance but that holiday must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body.

3.5 Term time leave of absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment) 2013 prohibits Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant and unavoidable; by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

If the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances and grants the leave it is for the Headteacher to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

A fixed penalty notice can be issued to families who do not abide by the decision.

3.6 Managing Absence

In order to maintain high levels of attendance and fulfil our legal responsibilities when a child is absent the following steps will be taken:

- If no notification of absence is given the office manager will contact the family during the first day of absence.
- Where no contact can be made with the family or absence is prolonged the office manager will refer the case to the Local Authority.
- If monitoring identifies patterns of poor or '*persistent absence*'² the headteacher will put a monitoring strategy in place. (see appendix 3)
- If attendance does not improve a referral will be made to the School Attendance Officer who, in exceptional circumstances, are able to prosecute.

(see Appendix 4: flowchart)

² the Government has identified the threshold for persistent absence as 10% (Sept 2015)

3.7 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

If it becomes necessary to consider a fixed penalty notice the school will work in partnership with the Local Authority who will issue the FPN.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.

The Central Bedfordshire process for FPN's is as follows

- If a child accrues 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence over a 12 week period a school may request the Access and inclusion Service to issue a FPN of £60 to the parent(s)
- If the £60 is not paid within 21 days it will increase to £120
- If the £120 is not paid within 28 days the Access and Inclusion Service will then prosecute the parent(s) in the local magistrates court. On conviction parent(s) can be fined up to £1000
- FPNs are issued on the basis of one per parent per child.

(FPN charges may change. Please check the Central Bedfordshire Council website for up to date charges).

3.8 Monitoring attendance

Attendance is monitored regularly.

- The Headteacher analyses pupil attendance each term and takes follow up action when attendance is poor or patterns are noticed. (see appendix 3)
- Teachers must inform the Headteacher when they notice patterns of absence; a sheet is appended to the class register for this purpose.
- A school attendance officer periodically checks the registers and identifies pupils with poor attendance and punctuality as well as those pupils with irregular attendance.
- The governors are informed of attendance analyses and returns at least annually
- To ensure appropriate action is ongoing we will make every effort to obtain the attendance history of pupils joining the school. We will provide attendance information on transfer to a new school.

The attendance monitoring file is stored in the headteacher's office.

3.9 Reporting attendance

To parents

The annual school report will include the child's percentage attendance figure. Where there are concerns about punctuality a comment will be included about this. Parents are able to make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss any concerns they have.

To the Access and Inclusion Team

The office manager provides an attendance print out of 90% and below to assist the School Attendance Officer with their register check.

To the DfE

Three times per year the office manager completes and returns the pupil census, this includes attendance information.

To the Governing Body

Following monitoring and analyses activities the Headteacher reports the outcome in the Headteacher's report.

4.0 Policy implementation

The policy and associated guidance will be discussed with staff and governors. A copy of the registration guidance will be included in the class register.

Families will be informed of the attendance procedures via the school website, school induction meetings and newsletters.

Appendix 1 - Registration Guidelines

Registers must be collected at the beginning of each session and returned following registration.

	Start	Register taken	Register returned to office	Register closes	Session ends
Morning Nursery	8.45	8.50	9.05	9.15	11.45
Morning Reception	8.45	8.50	9.05	9.15	11.45
Morning Key Stage 1	8.55	8.55	9.05	9.15	12.15
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Afternoon Key Stage 1	1.30	1.25	1.30	1.30	3.30
Afternoon Key Stage 2	1.30	1.25	1.30	1.30	3.30

Only mark in the children who are present in the class all other pupils are absent. Please ensure that late arrivals report to the school office.

The office manager will record reasons for absence and lateness in the register.

All notes or messages about absence must be sent to the office where they will be filed.

Appendix 2 - Registration Codes

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration (attended elsewhere)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (not medical or dental)	Authorised Absence	
J	Interview	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
L	Late (before register closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical / Dental	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after register closes)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	Non compulsory school age	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
!	No Attendance Required	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
#	Planned closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
*	Not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

Appendix 3 - Improving poor attendance and punctuality

The regular monitoring and analysis of school registers enables patterns and trends to be identified.

Step 1

Where poor attendance or punctuality is identified during the Headteacher or School Attendance Officer's monitoring the parent is written to and advised that their child is being monitored for the next half term. Parents are able to meet with the Headteacher to discuss this.

Step 2

Where the concern persists the Headteacher will invite the parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absence or punctuality difficulties. The purpose of this meeting is to plan for improvement. The Headteacher will continue to monitor the child's attendance each week.

Step 3

Where no improvement has been made the Headteacher will make a referral to the School Attendance Officer who will decide what further action is appropriate.

The aim throughout this process is to ensure all children have the best attendance possible. The school will work in partnership with parents and will take into account individual circumstances, applying the process accordingly.

A visit to families at home will be arranged if necessary.

Appendix 4 – Procedure for when a child is absent

