

Attendance Policy

LEIGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

ADOPTED BY GOVERNORS	
REVIEW TIMETABLE	Annually
RENEWAL DATE	AUTUMN TERM 2022

DOCUMENT CONTROL

DATES	NOTES	INITIALS
16/10/20	UPDATED FOR APPROVAL - reverted to the model policy updated p3 with Isle of Wight Council v Platt	FG
Nov 2020	Approved by Governors	
6/10/21	Updated and reviewed	FG/ EW
Oct 2021	Approved by Governors	

Introduction

Leighton Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. We promote the importance of regular attendance and strive to support children to attend school 'Every single day'. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils/students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Leighton is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We strive to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school play a key role in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. We work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils/students:

- are eager to learn;
- feel valued members of the school community;
- look forward to coming to school every day.

Attendance and Punctuality Officer

Leighton has a dedicated attendance officer who has the delegated responsibility to oversee, advise the Headteacher and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The attendance officer works closely with senior leaders and ensures up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly. Governors receive a termly attendance report. The Attendance Officer ensures attendance and punctuality issues are identified at an early stage. They work with school staff and parents to put in place support that will help improve attendance and punctuality of pupils.

Why Regular Attendance and punctuality is so Important:

Learning:

There is a correlation between poor attendance and low attainment.

Any absence will result in children missing days of learning. Learning is a continuous journey and missed days may lead to gaps in children's knowledge that if sustained may impact on their attainment.

When children arrive after the school day has started it is unsettling for the children and they find it more difficult to integrate into the lesson. This may impact behaviour in the classroom.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is every parent/carers legal responsibility. Permitting regular non absence without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters and on our Website;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

The Law relating to attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.

Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Reception Intake Induction period

In line with Peterborough City Council's Admissions Code, Leighton Primary School offers all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full time place at school if requested by the parents/carers.

Occasionally school staff may feel the need, under Exceptional Circumstances and in full agreement with parents/carers to use a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education by the use of a reduced timetable to assist in their transition to full-time education. This can be discussed within the first few weeks or in advance of your child starting School.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, both verbally and in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness (with medical evidence provided if requested), medical/dental appointments which inevitably fall in school time (with evidence of appointment seen), emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- days absent for birthdays
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays, day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional/unavoidable circumstance.
- a child's attendance is considered to be a concern and/or no acceptable medical evidence has been provided.
- where a parent/carer has not notified the school and we have to chase for a reason;

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your 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 attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice May be requested from the LA by the School:

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of 10% or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions);
- Persistent late arrivals at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at 10% or above.
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Telephone 01733 232949 (option 1) or email the School officeadmin@leightonprimary.net as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even after you have already telephoned us;
- Visit the school and report your child's absence to reception, who may arrange for the Attendance officer to speak with you.
- Provide medical evidence if requested by the school.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Visit the child's known address if we have not heard from you, or have any safeguarding concerns.
- Invite you to discuss the situation with us;
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. The School Attendance Officer will follow Local Authority Guidelines, using an initial letter system (appendix 1 & 2) If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team (appendix 3), S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher/form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

Currently your child's School day will start at 8.50am and finish at 3pm and we expect your child to be in class at the stated time.

Should your child arrive late and the gates are closed you will be expected to sign them in at the School office, where your child will receive a late mark.

20 Minutes after your child's expected arrival time the Registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that will indicate that your child is in the school building, but will be marked with a 'U' Code which is recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence:

Taking leave of absence without exceptional/unavoidable circumstances in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance, by submitting the correct Leave Of Absence form (available from the school office or School Website) giving as much notice as possible, allowing time for discussions to take place if necessary between the Parent/Carer, Headteacher and Attendance Officer. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that the Headteacher may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional /unavoidable circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the Headteacher and/or different from that agreed by the headteacher will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carers per child.

Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause;

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Mrs Faye Green - School Attendance Officer
- Mrs Emma Ward - Headteacher/Attendance Leader

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good school attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

The expectation of the school is that pupils should attend on every day that the school is open, unless there are exceptional circumstances which lead to an absence being authorised.

Letter A1 - Expressing Concern about Poor Attendance

Appendix 1

Parent/Carer name and Address

Dear Parent's name

Date

Re: Full name of pupil and DOB

We are writing to advise you that **Pupil's First Name's** school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to%. A copy of the attendance record is attached.

Regular attendance is a requirement and essential if pupils are to make the best use of their time at school. It enables them to keep up with the work and also maintain regular contact with their friends. Poor attendance creates the problem that having missed lessons they find it harder to understand subsequent work.

Pupil's First Name's attendance will continue to be monitored and you will be contacted again if it does not improve.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of, please contact **School Contact Name** and **Details** as soon as possible.

We would remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly on time and every day.

If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

Yours sincerely

School Signatory

Copy to: Attendance Officer

Letter A2 - No Improvement in Attendance – Invitation to Meeting

Appendix 2

Parent/Carer Name and Address

Dear Parent's Name

Date

Re: **Full Name of Pupil and DoB**

We write to advise you that **(Name of School)** continues to be / is concerned about **(Pupil First Name's)** school attendance. A copy of the attendance record is attached.

We would now like us to meet to discuss this matter on:

Place:

Date:

Time:

Please contact us on the above number if this meeting is not convenient so an alternative appointment can be made.

May we remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of your child at this School.

If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
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Yours sincerely

Name

Position

Copy to: Attendance Officer

Invitation to School Attendance Meeting supported by Local Authority Attendance Officer **Appendix3**

Parent/Carer Name and Address

Dear Parent/Carer Name(s)

Date

Re: **Full Name of Pupil and DoB:**

Further to our previous letters of (date) and (date)* we are writing to advise you that **Pupil First Name's** school attendance has not improved significantly. A copy of the attendance certificate is attached.

We are now inviting you to a **School Attendance Meeting**

On.....at.....am/pm

To be held at

Please be advised that your child's attendance has now been referred to the Local Authority Attendance Service.

It is important that you and **Pupil First Name** attend this meeting when we will discuss any issues which are impacting on **Pupil First Name's** attendance and agree an action plan to improve the situation.

A Local Authority Attendance Officer will be present at this meeting.

May we remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of your child at this school. If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
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Yours sincerely

School Signatory

Copy to: Attendance Officer