



# **Leighton School Attendance Policy**

**Agreed: Autumn 2019**  
**Review: Autumn 2020**

## **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. 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.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for 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 have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils/students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

## **The School Attendance Officer**

A member of our staff will oversee, direct 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. This person, known as the Attendance Officer, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils/students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

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. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the School Attendance Officer may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. 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

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so Important:**

### **Learning:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school 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 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**

PCC, in line with the Admissions Code, offer all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full time place at school if requested by the parents/carers.

Our School 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 and to assist in their transition to full-time education. This will be discussed 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 unavoidably 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;
- 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.
- 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 make 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 co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence 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 us or leave a message as soon as possible on the first day of absence, using option 1 on the phone line;
- 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 in 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.

### **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:**

The school day starts at 8.50am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Classroom Doors will be closed at 8.55am and you will be expected to sign your child in at the school office, where your child will receive a late mark.

At 9.10am 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 circumstance 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) 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/carer 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Hayley Sutton – Headteacher

Mrs Faye Green – Attendance Officer

### **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.**

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Leighton Primary School.

Parent Signed:

Print:

Child's Name:

Class/Form: