

LEICESTER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
PROCEDURE

Attendance Policy
Nov 2018

This procedure was initially adopted by the Governors on:

Revised on (Date)	Adopted on (Date)	Signed
	 Chair of Governors On behalf of the Governing Body
	 Chair of Governors On behalf of the Governing Body
	 Chair of Governors On behalf of the Governing Body
	 Chair of Governors On behalf of the Governing Body

This policy is read in conjunction with LCC Admissions Code of Practice

Introduction

Our motto of Aspire; Enjoy; Achieve encapsulates the ethos of our school where every individual is encouraged and supported to do the best they can do and be the best that they can be, and tells of the positive experience students have, both inside and outside of the classroom. For students 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 the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school, we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and the guidance set out by the Department for Education.

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.

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may 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 a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance

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

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Contact you on the first day and subsequent days your child is absent if we have not heard from you.

- Give you information on attendance in our regular newsletter and other social media.

- Provide you with termly reports on your child's performance, their attendance and punctuality and how this relates to their attainment.

- Celebrate good attendance by praising individual and class achievements.

- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

- Organise opportunities when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

- Work closely with families and the Education Welfare Officer to support families who may face difficulties.

Understanding types of absence

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (ie condoned absence)
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences linked to shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- Trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. The school, the parents/carers and the child should address any problems with regular attendance. 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 Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more sessions across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly.

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where necessary. Many of our PA pupils and their parents/carers are supported with an action plan to increase attendance. An action plan may include: *allocation of additional support through a Mentor or a Connexions worker, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance*. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedure

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, preferably before 9am;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- If you need to discuss the reason for absence, you can call into our school reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you either then or at a later point.

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- Write or telephone you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning level of absence or an emerging pattern of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with your child's Associate Head of Year/Head of Year or Assistant Principal if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. This could be by a Police Officer.

NB Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we do not have up to date numbers or emergency contacts) then something important may be missed. *There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.*

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or authorised prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.

NB Where a child is absent from school on repeated occasions the Local Authority may take court action against the parent rather than issuing further Penalty Notices. This is likely to lead to a criminal conviction and a fine of up to £2.500

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on 0116 454 5510 They can also be reached by e-mailing education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk.

Holidays in Term Time

Government legislation implemented in 2013 means that we do not authorise holidays for any year group. Leave of absence may be granted in exceptional circumstances and where a request has been made in advance.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking them away in school time.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance and authorisation is at the discretion of the school.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to parents (see above NB regarding court action).

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 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 **8.45 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.45 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be officially closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or court action if the problem persists.

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

If your child arrives late to school, they will be issued with a **15 minute break time detention** on the same day. Parents/Carers will be notified of this via a text message. If your child fails to attend the 15 minute break time detention, they will be placed in to a **30 minute Whole School Detention** on the same day. Once again you will be notified of this via text message. If your child fails to attend this 30 minute whole school detention then your child will be placed into a **60 minute Whole School Detention** the following day. You will be notified of this via text message.

Security of registers

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three year. The registers must be safely stored.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Date of Policy Review
Nov 2020

Appendix 1

The registration code system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	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/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
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)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education 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)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances

#	school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
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Appendix 2: How Soar Valley College monitors attendance

How Soar Valley College monitors attendance

Our Associate Heads of Year meet with our allocated Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) every two weeks to discuss all students with attendance below 96% and those students whose attendance is declining towards 96%

Step 1a:

Decision to monitor

Where a student has no history of previous persistent absence, or where previous absences have been authorised, a decision will be made to monitor that student

Step 1b:

Letter 1

Letter 1 will be sent for students who have a previous history of;

- persistent absence or
- Low attendance or
- Unauthorised absences

Letter 1 informs parents/carers of their child's attendance and reminds them of the need for improved attendance

Step 2:

Letter 2

Letter 2 will be sent for students who continue to have persistent absence or where attendance has not improved after Letter 1.

Letter 2 contains more detail regarding the legalities and warns that continued absences will result in EWO involvement.

Step 3:

Letter 3: EWO referral

Letter 3 will be sent for students who continue to have persistent absence or where attendance has not improved after Letter 2.

Letter 3 informs parent/carers that their case has been referred to the EWO along with further detail regarding the legalities of the process.

An Attendance Panel Meeting (APM) may be called as one of the supportive actions at this stage.

Step 4:

Fixed Penalty Notice / Court action

If a student continues to have unauthorised absence or where attendance has not improved then a decision to issue a fixed penalty notice or to pursue court action may be taken.