

Attendance Policy

Adopted by: Larkwood Academy Council

Date: October 2022

Review date: October 2023

Our unique approach

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive school, where we celebrate diversity and difference and acknowledge the richness that this brings to our school community.

We aim to provide opportunities for all children to access a broad, balanced and creative curriculum, regardless of age, attainment, ethnicity, language or background that is personalised to meet children's individual needs.

Introduction

We are 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 reach out for excellence. For our 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 the school is open.

Regular school attendance is crucial if a child is to achieve their full potential and research shows that raising pupils' attendance has contributed to raising achievements.

Overview

The policy is set out to reflect statutory requirements and the most recent guidance from the DFE. We expect all our children to attend school, on time every day, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. We have high expectations that each student should have a minimum of 96% attendance, but of course we consistently aim towards the goal of 100% for all students.

We will discuss any known attendance issues with parents and students prior to their admission, in order to identify appropriate strategies to offer support.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Any child'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 creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Our school gives high priority to working with children and parents to ensure we are doing our best to support the needs of our pupils. We recognise that good communication and strong home-school links are effective ways of solving any attendance issues and barriers that may impact on child's achievement. If necessary we will explore, identify and resolve those issues as quickly and efficiently as possible.

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.

The United Convention of Rights of the Child under Article 28 states 'Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity.'

Parental Responsibility

As a parent/carer it is your responsibility to ensure that your child receives a full-time education that meets their needs (e.g., if they have special educational needs or a disability). You can send your child to school or educate them yourself. Children must receive an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

It is the parents/ carers responsibility to communicate about any absences to the school and to ensure a good level of punctuality and attendance.

What is the role of the child?

Children are expected to attend school regularly, punctually and be appropriately prepared for lessons. The target attendance for all children is 100%. We aim to make children aware of these responsibilities and ensure that they want to come to school by offering a safe and stimulating experience when they are here.

What is the role of the Headteacher?

The Headteacher will ensure that the school meets all legal requirements, sets targets for attendance and publishes attendance figures. The Headteacher has a duty under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the London Borough of Waltham Forest where there is a poor pattern of attendance, or a child has had an unauthorised absence for a continuous period. Details of attendance and any connected initiatives are reported to the local Academy Council in each of the Headteacher's reports.

The role of the Academy Council

The Academy Council has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance in school and should be familiar with the current legislation and the school's registration system. They can request reports on attendance and procedures as necessary. They must ensure that the school is working above the government's benchmark of attendance for primary schools. One Academy Council member has particular responsibility for attendance and liaises with the Headteacher.

The role of the Education Attendance Advisor

The Education Attendance Advisor meets with the Senior Leadership Team and is the point of contact between the Local Authority BACME and the school.

The Education Attendance Advisor advises the school and monitors performance in relation to attendance and punctuality. The Educational Attendance Adviser receives referrals from the school for more focused interventions with particular families. Additional support is provided for children and families where there is a concern due punctuality or attendance.

These interventions include home visits, interviews at school, support for families with particular problems which affect attendance and punctuality. Where necessary, appropriate, legal action against families who are not fulfilling their responsibilities under the Education Act will be taken. These include penalty notices, fines (£60 per parent per child, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004) or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court.

The role of the Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team and the Academy Council will monitor attendance on a weekly and half-termly basis. They will make sure that parents and carers are aware of their responsibilities around attendance.

Quynh Hua, Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENCO has the overarching responsibility for attendance at Larkwood school who will be supported by and work closely alongside the Community Engagement officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence and keep us informed thereafter via the absence line or directly at the school office
- If your child is due to have a planned medical appointment or procedure/operation, you must notify the school in advance and provide documentary evidence in the form of an official letter or appointment card, parents must make every endeavour to book appointments outside of school hours.
- The school may still carry out a home visit even if parents call in to report the absence.

If your child is absent without notification, the school will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- If absent for 3 days undertake a home-visit.
- Ask you to provide medical evidence, for example a doctor's letter or prescription medication (over the counter medication is not sufficient), if attendance falls below 96%.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team if absences persist.
- Commence with attendance management processes if attendance does not improve.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in newsletters.
- Report on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements via the school newsletter and various incentives promoted throughout the school community.
- Promote and reward good or improving attendance in regular Key Stage assemblies.
- Reward good or improving attendance through Key Stage, Year Group and class competitions issuing certificates, trophies and pin badges.
- Reward good or improving attendance through special celebration break times, afternoons and days.
- Promote with parents/carers, children and staff, raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as illness. Medical/dental/optician appointments should be made outside of school time when possible. The appointment letter should be shown to the school office in advance.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. Unauthorised absences can lead to an application being made to the London Borough of Waltham Forest that may result in sanctions and/or legal proceedings at the local Magistrates Court.

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 late after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

- Day trips and holidays in term time

We recognise that there are cases where children may be reluctant to attend school. In these circumstances please contact the school as we can offer advice and support. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child.

An unauthorised absence is where the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable or where no reason has been given. The following apply to unauthorised absences:

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A 'persistent absentee' is a child that misses 10% or more schooling across the academic year (this includes authorised and unauthorised absences) for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absent mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately. Persistently absent children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic monitoring where absence affects attainment.

Children who are persistently absent will be monitored by the attendance team, senior leadership team and will be followed up by the Education Attendance Advisor.

DFE guidance September 2022

The DfE has published guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities which sets out the expectations of schools.

- Maintain a whole school culture that promotes benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which staff, parents and pupils understand. This should include:
 - Expectations, start and close of school day and include register closing times and the processes for requesting leave of absence.
 - In addition, the contact details of the senior leader must be noted and the named member of staff for contact on day-to-day absence.
 - DfE schools to list their day-to-day processes for managing attendance ie first day calling.
 - Consider how your school is promoting good attendance and how you use data to target pupils who need support.
 - Your school strategy on reducing persistent absence should be included along with details of the point at which a penalty notice will be sought.
 - This must be published on your website and sent to new joiners.
- Effective day-to-day processes to follow up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse data.
- Build strong relationships with families and remove barriers
- Share information and work collaboratively.
- Follow DfE guidance in relation to absences related to or as a result of Covid.

Registration

Class registers are legal documents and must be treated accordingly. The class teacher will ensure that the registration period is orderly and calm and that the registers are called promptly and accurately every morning and every afternoon. Registration should be taken at the same time to ensure consistency in identifying latecomers.

Daily Registers

The school day starts at 8.45am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. Children who arrive after 8:45am are coded “L” (late) in the register and the time of arrival is recorded. Those children who arrive after 9:15am are coded “U” which is an unauthorised absence.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. When a pupil arrives late to school, there are many consequences:

- They will miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the day.
- Pupils often feel awkward and embarrassed going into the classroom when everyone else is already settled.
- When one person arrives late – the class is disrupted and the teacher must take time away from the other pupils to explain what has been missed.
- Arriving 5 minutes late each day adds up to missing 3 entire days of school by the end of the academic year.
- Poor punctuality can also encourage absence.
- The school must ensure every child is recorded in case of emergency evacuation.

5 minutes late every day	=	3 school days lost each academic year
10 minutes late every day	=	6 school days lost each academic year
15 minutes late every day	=	10 school days lost each academic year
30 minutes late every day	=	19 school days lost each academic year

The school monitors punctuality on a weekly basis. Persistent lateness over a half-term will result in the following actions:

- 3-5 Late arrivals – text message sent to parents / carers
- 6-10 Late arrivals – a letter will be sent to parents / carers and recorded onto the child’s record
- 10+ Late arrivals – parents will be invited in to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Late Procedures

The school has the following procedures in place for children arriving late to school in the morning:

- Children arriving late for school must go through the front gate entrance directly to the glass doors with their accompanying parent/carer where they will meet the School Attendance Officer to record the child being late.
- This will be recorded as a late on the register.
- The glass doors will be opened at 8:46am after the school gates are closed at 8.45am.
- The child/ren and their accompanying parent/carer will be asked to line up and wait until they have been signed in by the School Attendance Officer. Children must not be left unaccompanied.
- Parents/carers will be given a copy of the school’s attendance leaflet to take away with them.
- Children will be given a late pass to hand over to the class teacher before joining the rest of the class.
- Any children arriving late after 9:05am must report to the school office.
- The senior leadership team will regularly carry out monitoring on a late gate.
- Parents will be invited to a school-based meeting to discuss their child/ren who are regularly late to find solutions to improve punctuality.

Children picked up late after school

Parents/carers must telephone the school office if they are running late and advise on the time of their arrival in school. On arrival, the school office will ask parents/carers to fill in a brief form detailing the reason for late collection.

The school will make all reasonable effort to contact parents/carers who fail to collect their child after school.

Please refer to the school's Dropping Off and Collection Policy which states if a parent/carer or an authorised adult has not collected the child/children from the school by 3.30pm on more than two occasions it will trigger the activation of child protection procedures including making a safeguarding referral to Social Care at LBWF.

Attendance of Looked After Children

The school has a designated teacher responsible for overseeing the education of children in public care. This role will include the monitoring of attendance rates which are reported to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Any concerns should be notified as soon as possible to the carer, social worker and School Attendance Officer for vulnerable children.

The designated LAC teacher at Lime Academy Primary is the Assistant Head (Safeguarding and inclusion Lead).

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 this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

School Term Time

Our term times are set in accordance with our Academy Trust and with consultation with the Local Authority recommendations.

The confirmation of our school term dates are available from our websites or the main school office . [Term Dates & Calendar \(limeacademylarkswood.org\)](http://limeacademylarkswood.org) Please do not refer to any other sources as these are not confirmed by ourselves.

Exceptional Leave in Term Time

Taking leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence. All applications for exceptional leave must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

The criteria that the school will apply to determine 'exceptional' is a circumstance that has unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, each individual request will be considered on its own merits and must be put in a letter directly to the Headteacher.

No authorisation for leave of absence can be given retrospectively, which means permission must always be sought beforehand.

In the event that leave for exceptional absence is granted, any further days of absence will be regarded as unauthorised. The school must be informed in all instances and where the cause is sickness a doctor's certificate must be produced. If a child fails to return on the agreed date, the Local Authority will be informed. The child will remain on roll whilst an investigation is carried out. If the child does not return to school, the school will make a Children Missing from Education Referral to the local authority and will liaise regarding the correct common transfer file. If your child does not return to school, he/she may lose their school place and you will be required to submit an application for a new school place to the local authority.

If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, social services will be immediately notified. The Academy Council will not authorise any leave at times when children are scheduled to take public examinations. Parents/carers will be notified as soon as these dates are known. If children are on leave without authorisation, the London Borough of Waltham Forest has the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices of £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004).

Special Leave Requests in Term Time

We understand and encourage participation in external school activities and pursuits. This can sometimes lead to pupils requiring special leave from school to attend additional training, competitions and other events.

The school will grant a maximum of 5 days special leave throughout the academic year to support the development and aspirations of the children. Special leave must be requested in writing to the Headteacher, accompanied by an official invite on headed paper from the organisers / providers and shared with the local authority. Any days additional to this or absence due to sickness prior to or after the requested date will be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless medical evidence is provided.

Child License – if your child is modelling / performing for film / TV / publications etc. legislation sets out that in addition to the above guidance the parents must obtain a Local Authority License.

Monitoring attendance and punctuality

The Senior Leadership Team works closely with class teachers, the school office, the Education Attendance Advisor and the London Borough of Waltham Forest Education BACME Service. School registers are monitored daily to identify class attendance and punctuality percentages. Individual attendance and punctuality is monitored on a daily basis.

During visits with the School's Education Attendance Officer all children's punctuality and attendance are discussed. After determining whether there are valid reasons for lateness or absences, parents/carers can be written to or invited to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or School Attendance Officer to discuss how to resolve any identified problems. If there is a pattern of poor attendance the school will invite parents/ carers to a School Attendance Panel Meeting (SAP). At this meeting it will be an opportunity for parents/ carers to hear how their child is getting on at school and any points they would like to discuss. The Education Attendance Advisor will make recommendations at the meeting There will also be an opportunity for the Education Attendance Advisor to inform parents/ carers of their legal responsibility as a parent or carer to ensure the regular school attendance of your child, and the possibility of being passed to the local authority for consideration that the matter to presented at the local magistrate's court.

Change of address

If a family are moving to a new address, parents/carers must provide the school with their new address and contact numbers in writing with proof of the address change. If the family are moving overseas, parents/carers must provide travel documents and a forwarding address. Failure to do this will result in a Children Missing from Education referral to the London Borough of Waltham Forest. School can also support families by making a Migration referral to the new area to support an educational placement being allocated by the new local authority.

Telephone numbers/email

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers. You must provide the school with up to date

numbers/email addresses, if you don't then something important may be missed. There will be checks made on telephone numbers/email addresses and contact details throughout the academic year.

Transferring to another school

Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are removing their child to start at another school. The parents/carers must provide the name of the new school. If a family are moving to a new address, which requires the child to attend a new school but the child is not yet registered then parents/carers must provide school with their new address. Occasionally children may move away from the school without notifying us. We make every reasonable effort to locate the child and their family. Removal from roll may be backdated if we subsequently receive proof of dates of attendance at the new school. If we are unable to make communication with the family, the child is kept on roll and the BACME Service and Children Missing Education Service are notified. Once confirmation has been received that the child has started another school, they will be removed from Larkswood school roll.

Families moving abroad

Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are moving abroad and the parents/carers must provide the new home address and new school address. The parents/carers must provide flight details. Failure to provide this information to the school, will result in a referral to the child/children to Child Missing From Education (CMFE) and will also communicate with 'Home Office' and other child safeguarding agencies.

[Please contact the school office to make an appointment to discuss your child's attendance](#)
