



# Longford Primary Academy

Member of staff responsible: Principal

Date policy written: Spring 2018

Date approved by the full Governing body:

Date to be reviewed: Spring 2019

## Attendance policy

### **Principles**

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

### **School Responsibilities:**

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through the use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance

and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

### **Parents or Carers Responsibilities :**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time - this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

### **The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:**

- The Department of Education published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. (February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 Department of Education). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.
- The results are very clear - missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.

### **Admissions Register**

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

A pupil may only be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they :

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below)
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;

- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

School will notify the Local Authority in advance of any deletion.

### **Elective Home Education :**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this - particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, hospital appointment or other unavoidable cause. If dental /medical appointments have to be taken during school time, pupils should attend school before and after appointments when possible.

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

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily (including holidays)
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Registers are monitored daily by the school secretary and weekly by the Principal. The EWO and Principal meet  $\frac{1}{2}$  termly to review attendance and discuss individual children where attendance is causing concern. Whole school attendance is reported to the Governing Board at least termly. Individual attendance is reported to parents in termly reports and letters.

### **Persistent Absence**

A child is considered to be a Persistent Absentee (PA) when absence (whether authorised or unauthorised) amounts to 10% or more of the sessions when school has been open.

### **Reporting Absence and Procedures for referral**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Parents are expected to let school know if child is absent that day by telephone between 8.30am-9.00am stating the reason for the absence.
- On the child's return to school a short note of absence explanation should be given to the child's class teacher. A slip is available in school if no note has been received on the first day back and must be completed by the parent.
- For any parent that has not let the school know of absence then we, as a school, will try to make first contact after 9.05am on the day of the absence. (This may be by phone and/or text).
- If a pupil is regularly late (arrival after 9.05am) parents will be contacted directly by letter by school. If this continues, a referral to the EWO will be made by the school and a penalty notice may be issued after 10 late marks in a 12 week period.
- At below 95% a warning attendance letter is sent to parents. (This includes parents who may have had leave authorised as this does effect overall attendance absence).
- If attendance continues to fall after the first letter, medical evidence may be requested on all further absences and parents may be requested to attend an attendance clinic.
- The Local Authority may be informed of the absence of any child without school's permission. School will involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where the absence of a particular child presents immediate cause for concern.
- Requests for leave of absence must be made in writing (form available on the website or from school office) and for holidays to be considered, should be submitted at least 6 weeks in advance. Authorisation will only be in exceptional circumstances and where the child has a current and previous good attendance rate above 95%. All unauthorised holiday will be considered for the issuing of a penalty notice.
- When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the EWO will be made by the school. Following investigation, any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.
- Where it is suspected a child has been on holiday but a holiday request was not received, a letter will be issued informing the parents of the suspicion of holiday being taken and inviting them to provide evidence of an alternative

reason for the absence before the register is marked to show unauthorised holiday was taken.

- The Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be found at <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

### **Information about school initiatives**

School will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Officers (EWO), where required, in order to ensure all children can benefit from regular good punctuality and attendance.

School will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Attendance certificates are issued each term to recognise good attendance of 100%, 99% and 98% attendance (Gold, Silver and Bronze).

Recognition and a small reward is given to all children with 100% attendance for the whole school year.

School administrative staff or support staff will contact parents on any day a registered pupil of compulsory school age is absent without explanation. By contacting the parent the school also ensure that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe. (This may be by text).

Each week children will receive an attendance certificate for the best or most improved attendance for a class during celebration assembly.

Attendance information is regularly given out on our weekly newsletter.

Attendance is a key feature on all school reports.

### **Summary**

The school is committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

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

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

This policy is written within the legal framework of:

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments;
- The Education and Skills Act 2008;
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy respects the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The following aspects of the Convention relate most directly to this policy:

- Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
- Article 28: All children and young people have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.
- Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Leave of Absence request form

**Request for leave during term time****Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time**

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and return it to school**. This form should be returned in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot retrospectively authorise any leave of absence under any circumstances.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
  - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
  - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
  - the overall attendance pattern of the child
  - frequency of similar requests
  - whether the parent made the request in advance
  - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. **Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent\* per child. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.**
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.
10. Any disagreement between estranged parents should be resolved prior to submitting this request to your child's school.

\* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

**Request for leave during term time**

Dear Principal,

Date.....

I request consideration for a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

My child full name..... Date of birth:.....

Address:.....

For the period from (date):..... to (date):.....

Total number of days:.....

Name(s) of parent/carers who will be with the child(ren) when the leave is taken:

Full name.....

Full name.....

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -  
**(Please detail below the reason for your request for absence in term time and where relevant, include any supporting information. Please read the attached guidance notes for parents.)**

.....  
.....  
.....

Are there any siblings of compulsory school age Yes/No  
If so, please complete full names below

Child(ren)'s full name ..... School(s) attended.....  
.....  
.....

**Declaration:**

*I have read the guidance notes for parents overleaf and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. **Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.***

Signature of 1<sup>st</sup> parent/carer(s) ..... Print Full Name.....

Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> parent/carer(s) ..... Print Full Name.....

**Please return completed form to the school office.**  
**The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.**



**For Office Use Only**

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time .....(this academic year)

**Agreed/Not Agreed**

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request : .....

Signed .....Head teacher . Date .....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carer.....