

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Lakenheath Community Primary School



Version Number	6
Date of Policy	July 2022
Review Date	July 2021
Head Teacher's Signature	
Chair of Governors' Signature	

## Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Details
1	November 2017	N/A
2	June 2018	Format update and content review.
3	July 2019	Content Review – amendments suggested by EWO.
4	July 2020	Content review, no changes required.
5	July 2021	Changes made to timings for staggered start and finish.
6	July 2022	Content review, no changes required.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Our school is committed to providing a high-quality education for all its pupils. By attending school every day and on time children and young people can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, 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.

1.3 Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

1.4 We encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that "parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly".

## **2. Aims & Objectives**

2.1 This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

2.2 Through this policy we aim to:

- a. Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- b. Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- c. Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- d. Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- e. Ensure that our policy applies to non-statutory school age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- f. Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- g. Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- h. Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- i. Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

## **3. School's responsibilities**

3.1 All the staff at our school will place a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

3.2 School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:-

- a. ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- b. differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence);
- c. responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;

- d. contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and recording the contact;
- e. consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- f. promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school);
- g. acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils and classes.

#### **4. Responsibility of Parents/Carers**

4.1 Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

#### **5. Punctuality**

5.1 It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- a. To ensure that their children arrive to school on time.
  - i. The morning register will be called promptly at 8:40am in EY, 8:45am in KS1 and 8:50am in KS2. Registers will close 10 minutes after these times, late arrivals before the register closes will be marked as late (L) and after will be marked as unauthorised absence (U).
  - ii. The afternoon register will be called promptly at 12:45pm in EY, 13:00pm in KS1 and 13:15pm in KS2. Registers will close 10 minutes after these times, late arrivals before the register closes will be marked as late (L) and after will be marked as unauthorised absence (U).
- b. To ensure children who arrive after the registers has been called, report to the school office to sign in.

#### **6. Absences**

6.1 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- a. To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office, emailing or via SchoolComms.
- b. To provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.
- c. To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- d. To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.

#### **7. Illness/Medical absences**

7.1 In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

7.2 The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday or if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

## **8. Absence for Holidays**

- 8.1 Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.
- 8.2 Parents/carers requesting a term time holiday must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head.
- 8.3 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:
- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
  - To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).
- 8.4 If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Head's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised.
- 8.5 An immediate fixed penalty notice fine will be issued when more than 8 unauthorised absence sessions (half days) have occurred.
- 8.6 The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.
- 8.7 A fixed penalty notice will be issued for the first unauthorised holiday taken during term time. Any further unauthorised holiday will be referred to the Local Authority for prosecution.

## **9. Absence for Other Reasons**

- 9.1 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:
- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
  - To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

## **10. Unexplained Absence**

- 10.1 When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.
- 10.2 Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

## **11. Role of the Education Welfare Officer**

- 11.1 To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- 11.2 To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- 11.3 To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.

11.4 To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.

11.5 To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.

## **12. Children Missing in Education**

12.1 If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified and a home visit may be carried out.

## **13. Persistent Latecomers**

13.1 Children who repeatedly attend school late after registers close will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer does unannounced gate checks.

13.2 Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after the register has closed are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.