

LITTLEMOOR CHILDREN'S CENTRE & SCHOOL **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This policy was developed through a process of consultation with the relevant professionals.

Policy Statement

Through high-quality, rich learning experiences we are committed to ensuring that all children achieve their full potential in an exciting and inclusive learning environment in which they feel safe, happy and secure. Good attendance and positive behaviour are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in some cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents, carers, local community and the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and will be recognised as such by the school.

The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Attendance Strategies

This policy integrates with other policies that impact upon attendance such as equal opportunities, special needs, behaviour management.

Strategies: rewards/incentives, first day phoning, parent meetings

Aims

- To improve the quality of school life
- To promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents, carers and staff that the school values good attendance
- To ensure that the school community recognises that regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in the implementation of attendance procedures, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive
- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To ensure that such data is used effectively by school managers and staff
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these in the School Attendance Plan
- To target resources and implement where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame

- To keep parents/carers, pupils and governors informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets relating to whole-school attendance, together with target that may have been set for vulnerable groups, such as children in care.

Objectives

- State how communication between all the partners in the process will be implemented.
- To involve the children more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parents/carers about regular school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children's attendance
- To recognise the important role of class teachers in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure the time and organisation are in existence within the school to enable the AIMS and OBJECTIVES to be met
- To have an effective working relationship with Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service, which includes the reporting of half-termly figures to the service.

Introduction

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling, and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility, and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Procedures

Promoting Regular Attendance

It is everybody's responsibility to help to create a pattern of regular attendance-parents, pupils and all members of the school staff.

To help us to focus on this we will:

- Make parents aware of the content of our attendance policy.
- Display this policy on the school's website.
- Provide regular updates/details on attendance in our school newsletters.
- Operate first day calling/texting system if parents/carers have not informed the school of the reason for their child's absence.
- Have classroom/school displays which promote and celebrate good attendance.
- Ensure that the registration period is an engaging one for the children, including each child having the opportunity to stamp their weekly attendance card.
- Reward good or improving attendance in a variety of ways:
 1. Have an Attendance Bear which is awarded to the class with the highest weekly attendance.
 2. Sending a congratulatory text to the parent/carer of any child who achieves 100% attendance in any week.

3. Celebrate 100% half-termly attendance by issuing a certificate and small prize.
 4. Children who achieve 100% attendance for a term have a special lunch with the Head Teacher.
 5. Any child achieving 100% attendance for the whole year will be awarded a cash reward/voucher.
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance, in conjunction with the child's annual report.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings and/or afternoons away from school with good reason eg. Illness, medical/dental appointments, 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 authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These absences include:

1. Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
2. Absences which have never been properly explained
3. Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
4. Taking children on shopping trips
5. Birthdays
6. Keeping the child at home when another family member is ill
7. Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This level of absence is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents and carers to tackle this.

Any child whose absence level has reached the PA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully; we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

These pupils are subject to an Action Plan which may include:

- The support of the School Nurse or Education Welfare Officer
- Details of strategies such as Circle Time, Individual Intervention programmes and Individual Targets.

Absence Procedures

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If your child is absent from school, the parent/carer must contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence and before 9:00am; this can be by phone or in person at the office.

If parents/carers fail to contact school, then the school will telephone or text on the first day of absence.

You may be invited into school to discuss your child's absences with the Head Teacher.

Lateness

School begins at 8:45am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time.

Registers are marked by 8:55am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9:30 am the registers are 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. However, this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorized absence. This could mean that parents/carers could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem. However, you can approach school at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and by celebrating good class punctuality.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school-time to go on holiday.

From 1 September 2013, legislation prohibits any school from authorising leave of absence for holidays except in exceptional circumstances. **It is therefore illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** All applications for leave must be made in advance and be at the discretion of the school. The head teacher has the discretion to grant up to ten days authorised absence for family holidays in a school year. However, each application will be considered individually, taking into account the pupil's attendance, the timing of the holiday and any exceptional circumstances.

It is therefore illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Schools are in session for 38 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 14 weeks.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on:

- a. what might be defined as exceptional circumstances;

- b. procedures for applying for leave of absence for holiday;
- c. the criteria the school will use in deciding whether to refer any unauthorised absence due to holidays in term time to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Fine.

2. CRITERIA FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It is not possible to define all exceptional circumstances, but examples of what might be considered as such are:

1. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation.
2. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
3. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.

Where there are other factors which the headteacher may consider to be exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Local Authority for advice.

3. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING

- a. Applications for leave of absence for holiday should always be made in advance on the correct form. Forms can be obtained from the school office or can be downloaded from the school website. They should be returned to the office along with supporting documentation.
- b. The exceptional circumstances to explain why the holiday must be taken during term time must be clearly stated at the point of application.
- c. The Head Teacher will decide whether the leave of absence can be authorised and will contact the parent to inform them of the outcome.
- d. Even where there are exceptional circumstances, no holidays requests will be granted during the month of May for those children in Year 2 due to SATs.

Parents are strongly advised not to take any holidays during term time. Even though children are in primary school, the foundations for learning are built during these years and research shows that children who are away from school are very unlikely to catch up with the work that they miss

4. CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING AN UNAUTHORISED HOLIDAY

Taking a holiday without authorisation will have an impact on a child's learning. Parents who choose to take an unauthorised holiday must accept that this will have an adverse effect on their child's educational achievement. The school may therefore ask the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty fine where an unauthorised holiday has been taken. The fixed penalty fine is collected and kept by the Local Authority, not the school.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances a fixed penalty fine will be issued:

- a. When the holiday absence causes the child's attendance to fall below 90% in the calendar year
- b. When there has been a previous unauthorised holiday(s) in the same academic year of 5 or more days.

Parents/Carers will be advised of our policy on attendance

- When their children first start at school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parents/carers evenings
- In the school prospectus
- In the annual Governors' Report to Parents/Carers

Children will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum

Reporting

- Head teacher to provide an attendance report to the governing body each term

The School will use [a computerised system](#) for keeping the 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 pupils	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

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes.

(Phoenix report AO2). Alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years.

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Appendices

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
 - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration