

# **Littlemoor Children's Centre & School**



**Happy & Aiming High**

## **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

**Effective Date: September 2018**

**Attendance Governors: Louise McQuillan & Michael Pearson**

**Date to be reviewed July 2019**

## **Introduction**

At Littlemoor, we believe excellent attendance and punctuality are vital in helping our children achieve their best. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. All research shows that students who attend well achieve well.

The government has laid down guidelines which they expect children in primary schools to achieve in terms of attendance. Although we strive for every child to have 100% attendance, government guidelines state that all children should achieve a minimum of 96.1% attendance each academic year.

We do acknowledge that there are however certain instances where this may not be possible due to illness etc. Whilst some absences may be unavoidable, we would ask that you support us in ensuring your child's attendance meets both the school and the government's expectations. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out by school with the students/parents at an early stage.

We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. Where attendance is an issue, school undertakes a wide range of measures to support children and families. Where we fail to see an improvement in attendance, it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the child receives the support required to bring about an improvement.

**Our school target for attendance is 97%+.** Absence results in lost learning time and, although children may endeavour to catch up missed work, it cannot replace the teacher-led learning that has taken place. Absentees also miss out on the rich programme of extra-curricular activities and events that make the school experience so enjoyable.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

**Learning:** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning. Any absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from the school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the 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 the School on a regular basis may be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### **Expectations**

#### **We expect the following from all of our students:**

- That they will attend the school every day it is open, achieving 100% attendance, unless they have a genuine illness
- That they will be appropriately prepared for the day
- That they will inform the school of any problems which affect attendance or punctuality.

#### **We expect the following from parents with regards to attendance and punctuality:**

- To ensure all children attend the school regularly, on time and to be aware of their legal responsibilities
- To ensure they contact the school every day their child is unable to attend, using the school's telephone number 01302 701353
- To ensure that their child is appropriately prepared for the day
- To contact the school in confidence whenever they have a problem concerning attendance or punctuality
- To be fully aware of the Y1 and Y2 test period and to support attendance during these periods.
- Not to arrange a holiday in term time
- To respond to the appropriate person regarding letters of concern immediately
- To make every effort to arrange dental and medical appointments out of the school day
- That telephone contact numbers are available and if changed, the school is informed immediately.

#### **Parents can expect the following from Littlemoor School:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Support from Littlemoor to improve attendance and deal with any underlying issues.
- Early contact from the school when a child fails to attend the school without reason; this will usually involve a home visit on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> day of absence
- A prompt response to problems notified to us
- The celebration and rewarding of good and improving attendance through competitions, certificates, prizes and events
- Support when there is a problem of long term illness
- Involvement with Doncaster Children's' Services when appropriate
- Follow up **procedures** from the school's attendance team.

These **procedures** are instigated when:

- a) **Attendance drops below 96%.**
- b) **There are obvious patterns of repeated absence or lateness**
- c) **When lateness or absenteeism starts having a negative impact on a child's education.**

### **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'*

*Furthermore, the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments to legislation give schools and local authorities the powers to take legal action against parents to enforce attendance at the school they are registered to attend.*

### **Children missing from education**

We recognise that when a child goes missing from school it is a potential indicator of a safeguarding concern; therefore, we follow the Doncaster Safeguarding Board procedures. The full version can be found at:

<http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/children-missing-education>

The school will investigate instances of unauthorised absences and will report children with irregular attendance, or who have **been continuously absent for 10 days** or more, to Doncaster Council. The school reserves the right to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children's Social Care, Police, YOS, Housing, Doncaster Council etc.) if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents.

### **Pupils who have gone missing from a Doncaster School**

(It is important to note that any Safeguarding concerns regarding the immediate safety or well-being of a child need to be referred immediately to Social Care and the police if appropriate)

When school suspect they have a missing pupil the following procedures must take place.

- From the 1st day of absence and up to the 10th school day of absence the school must make initial enquiries to locate the child
- If school have not been able to confirm the location of the child by the 11th school day of absence they must complete the 'Moved Out of

Doncaster/Whereabouts unknown' form completing the checklist and send to [welfare.service@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:welfare.service@doncaster.gov.uk)

- If school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and the child has been absent for a minimum of 20 school days, the school can remove the child's name from its admission register from the first day of absence.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education. In such cases, as those listed below, school will take a pro-active approach:

- Children at risk of harm / neglect (school will follow standard Child Protection procedures for referrals to social care / police);
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families (school will inform local authority when a GRT child leaves the school without identifying a new destination school);
- Families of Armed Forces (school will contact MOD Children's Education Advisory Service for advice on making arrangements for continuity of education);
- Missing children / runaways (direct referral to Children's Services and Police); and,
- Children who cease to attend a school (referral to Doncaster Council).

### **Medical Illness**

- If your child is ill then please ring the school to notify the attendance team of their absence. Please ensure that your child returns to the school as soon as possible, even if they are not 100%. Please note that we can administer prescribed medication to your child if this is required more than 3 times per day. (A parental consent form has to be completed in the office.)
- If your child is absent from school for 5 days or longer please provide medical evidence, i.e. an appointment card, indicating the reason for absence.

### **Medical Appointments**

A full day's absence will not be authorised for a medical appointment. Please arrange all appointments outside the school day. If the appointment is unavoidable, your child must come to school before and after the appointment. Any full day's absence will be marked as unauthorised.

We do appreciate that it is often difficult for parents to obtain written confirmation of medical appointments. Parents can obtain 'Medical Authorisation Cards' from school to take with them to the doctors to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment. Parents must ensure the card is stamped, dated and signed by the surgery to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment.

## **Requests for absence during term-time**

**A leave of absence from must be completed by parents if their child is to be taken out of school during term-time.**

Due to Government legislation the school is no longer able to authorise any holiday during school time. This absence will therefore be recorded as unauthorised absence on your child's attendance record unless this is deemed to be an exceptional circumstance which would need to be agreed by the Head Teacher.

A Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority following your child's absence. Penalty notices are issued at £60 per parent (if paid within 21 days) and £120 (if paid within 28 days) for each child. A leave of absence form is available from the school office or website.

**If you do not notify us but we have evidence that your child has been on holiday, a fixed penalty fine may still be issued.**

## **Celebrating and rewarding good attendance**

Good and improved attendance is rewarded by the school with various incentives for individual children and classes; these include celebration assemblies, prizes and certificates.

## **Responding to non-attendance**

Where a pupil is absent and we have had no contact from a parent, the school will respond in the following manner:

- First day text will be sent shortly after registration closes.
- **First day telephone contact will be implemented for all absent children after 9.30am; further attempts at communication will also be made, including home visits**
- Persistent non-attendance will be brought to the attention of the Education and Welfare Service.
- Further action may include participation in attendance improvement initiatives, home visits and/or meetings between the school, parents/carers and students and, if appropriate, other agencies in an attempt to identify and solve the problems which are preventing the child from attending school.

In cases where attendance does not improve appropriate action will be taken by the Education and Welfare Service in liaison with the school.

## **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from the School has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of an absence is always required.

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

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 school and or the Local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular non-attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, excusing them from attending makes the situation worse as it gives the impression that attendance does not matter.

### **Persistent absence**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages a child's educational prospects. Persistent Absentee children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

### **Punctuality**

Children should be in school by 8:55am. If they are not they will be classed as late. Parents of children who are deemed to be persistently late will be expected to meet with a member of the school's attendance team.

### **Absence Procedures for Parents**

**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence on **01302 701353**.

### **Personal Details**

**It is vital that parental details are correct.** There are times when we need to contact parents to discuss absence or more importantly to contact a parent in the event of an emergency. Data check sheets are distributed at the start of the school year and it is the expectation that parents notify the school of any changes in personal contact details.

### **Moving to a different school or academy**

It is important that if families decide to send their child/children in their care to a different school/academy they must inform Littlemoor as soon as possible.

**Your child/children must continue their education with the school** until their start date at the new school.

Schools/academies may be reluctant to take a child onto roll where attendance is low and so it is imperative that they continue to attend.

A student will not be removed from the schools roll until we have received confirmation that they have started at the new school/academy and the following information has been received and verified:

- The date the student is leaving this school and starting a new school/academy.
- The address of the new school/academy, and confirmation from that school/academy that the student has been admitted.
- The new home address.

The child's school record will then be sent on to the new school/academy as soon as possible. In the case of movement abroad records will be provided for the child to take with them.

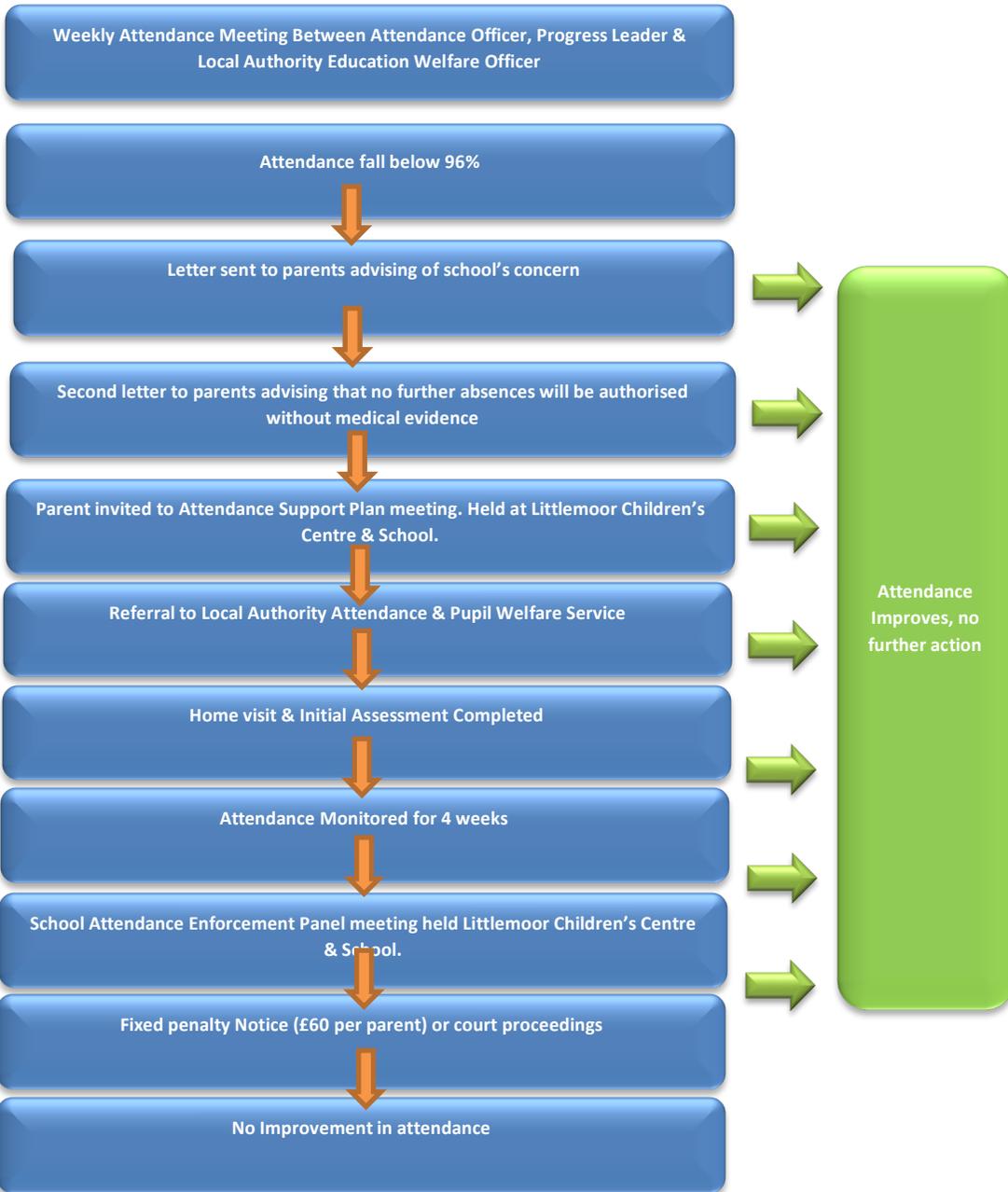
In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the child and family will be referred to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education'.

The school will complete a 'Common Transfer File' (CTF) for all pupils leaving the academy for another school/academy.

### **New children**

Any parent wishing to apply for a place at the school may do so following our admissions policy.

# Attendance Flow Chart



Descriptor	% Attendance	Number of days absent over a year	Lost Learning hours over a year
<b>Excellent</b>	100%	0	0
	99%	2	13
<b>Good</b>	98%	4	26
	97%	6	39
	96%	8	52
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	95%	10	65
	94%	12	78
<b>Cause for concern</b>	93%	14	91
	92%	16	104
	91%	18	117
<b>Serious cause for concern: Persistent Absenteeism</b>	90% and below	20+	130+

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