



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Updated: Autumn 2021
Next Review: Autumn 2025

Reviewed, approved and ratified by: Full Governing Body
Written by SLT

(In consultation with Model Attendance Policy written by HCC)

Work Together, Achieve Together

Rationale

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children and young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

Objectives

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school

Targets

- To ensure our school attendance % is above national levels at all times and for all groups.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Leadership and Management Team are responsible for:

- offering a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by all staff, pupils and families.
- Making sure all staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- expecting good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that all pupils understand its importance.
- conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- recognising attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- ensuring Governors should have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- the implementation of the policy.
- all staff knowing and understanding their responsibilities for attendance.
- agreeing whether an absence should be authorised. The power to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher or delegated person within the school, and not with parents or the local authority – see Appendix A for circumstances under which an absence will be authorised;
- working actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- having clear policies in place to address persistent absence.
- ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- monitoring trends.
- Implementing a system for all parents to report a child's absence.
- reporting to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- reminding all parents of their commitment to this policy.
- building respectful relationships with all staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.

- communicating openly and honestly with all staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for all staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
 - treat all pupils with dignity
 - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
 - communicate effectively with all families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
 - deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
 - use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
 - regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through your regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
 - establish and monitor the implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness
 - engage community businesses, partners and residents to promote attendance and report non-attendance
 - monitor whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
 - establish, implement and monitor robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME)
 - develop good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)
 - engage all pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions
 - Ensure that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education

Teaching Staff are responsible for:

- setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- implementing the policy;
- ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
- monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- informing the school office of any concerns;
- emphasising with children the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
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We will use some or all of the following strategies:

- rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- apply rewards and sanctions consistently
- follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality
- review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets
- periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments
- proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils

Role of Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30 am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- not booking holidays during term-time.

- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling on staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Dealing with lateness

The following strategies are in place to deal with lateness:

- The HT/SLT and teachers will monitor for patterns of lateness
- The gates open at 8.45 for a staggered start. All children should be in class ready to learn by 9am at the latest. For this reason the gates are shut at 8.55am. This allows five minutes to get to class.
- If the gates are shut, the children should go directly to the office to be signed in. Lateness can then be monitored by the office team
- Children arriving after 9am will be marked as L

Pupils at Risk of Persistent absence

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue by:

- establishing robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem, for example by:
 - sending letters to parents and carers
 - meeting with parents to identify barriers to attending school and set targets
 - engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
 - using fixed penalty notices
 - engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate
 - establishing a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
 - engaging governors in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

The exact approach taken will be decided on a case by case approach, working alongside families and County support.

Pupils who are persistently absent

Some or all of the following strategies will be used depending on the needs of the individual case when it presents:

- establish clear and effective service level agreements with external partners to support pupils with persistent absence, including:
 - local authority attendance services
 - independent attendance organisations
 - alternative providers
 - school nursing and mental health professionals
 - children's social care staff where appropriate

Absence

Holidays during term time – changes to legislation which came into force in September 2013 made clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances behind your request you should discuss these with the Headteacher. Please see appendix A and B

Religious Observance – a maximum of 3 days absence is allowed for recognised religious observance.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – where possible, please ensure these appointments take place out of school time in order not to disrupt your child's education

Fixed Penalty Notices

If it becomes necessary, the school will follow Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures. The guidance on the grid will be followed if we need to go down this route.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.
- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

Part Time Timetables

As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.

The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday)

All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part -time timetable. At Ladbroke we will follow this guidance if any child is on a reduced timetable.

Reporting

Absences, both authorised and unauthorised, are reported to parents in the annual written report and informally at parent consultations

Monitoring

Attendance data will be collected regularly in order to identify patterns of absence or lateness, to set targets and to monitor the effectiveness of the school's policy and its implementation.

Class attendance is monitored weekly and patterns of absence, if any, are identified. Awards are given as classes for good attendance. No class is penalised if a child has a medical conditions which involves regular medical appointments or possible prolonged absence. An attendance board is displayed in the hall and used to promote good attendance.

Termly, individual attendance is monitored. Class lists are printed out and individuals with lower than 85% attendance is highlighted and meetings with parents are arranged. Low attendance, below 95%, is highlighted by teachers at parent consultations.

Any significant concerns regarding attendance are raised with the Attendance Improvement Officer from County

Attendance data will be monitored termly by the governing body and support given where necessary.

APPENDIX A

AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

ABSENCE WILL BE AUTHORISED IF

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- There is a close family bereavement.
- Leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.

ABSENCE WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED IF

- no explanation is offered
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday for longer than the time negotiated with the school
- the pupil is on a family holiday without permission or the parents have not applied for leave of absence in advance and instead seek retrospective approval

EXTENDED LEAVE

- **Absence from school for family holidays is not a right**
- **Headteachers may not authorise any leave during term time unless there is an exceptional reason.**
- Authorisation for extended leave will only be given
 - Once in an academic year
 - If the child's attendance is good (over 96%)
 - If it is applied for in advance
 - If there are exceptional circumstances
- No absences will be authorised during the following times
 - In the first three weeks of a new school year
 - During SATs week in May (Y2 and Y6)
 - During the four weeks preceding SATs in the Summer Term (Y6)

Appendix B

REQUEST FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES



You are reminded that we strongly discourage families from withdrawing their children from school or taking their holidays during term time as it is disruptive to the children's education.

Absence from school for family holidays is not a right.

I would like to apply for an authorised absence from school for the child named below	
CHILD'S NAME:	
CLASS:	
FROM	TO

The circumstances that require my child to be absent from school are	
Signed	Date

OFFICE USE	
Permission for authorised absence is granted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permission for authorised absence has NOT been granted because:	
Signed	Headteacher