



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This Policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for Attendance at Linton Primary School.

The Policy was reviewed in Autumn '16 through a process of consultation with teaching staff and the Governing Body.

It was approved by the governing body - Autumn 2016 and shall be reviewed in Autumn 2017.

Introduction and background

Linton Primary School recognises that good attendance and punctuality are key to promoting pupil progress and success. Good attendance is:

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.”

DfE ‘School Attendance: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities’ October 2014

This policy underpins our aims to:

- Promote children’s welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every pupil has access to full time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed while at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school on time.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning, personal and social development. Any pupil’s absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters

- Report a child's attendance to parents/carers at the end of the Autumn and Spring term and with the annual school report
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's threshold targets for attendance
- Celebrate good attendance

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, not 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 school for a good reason like illness, emergencies, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time or other unavoidable causes.

We would request that routine dental checks or medical appointments are made outside the school day.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no consent has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have not been reported by a parent/carer or have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Holidays in term time, unless in the most exceptional circumstances

Parents should consider carefully whether to keep a child off with an illness that is not definite, for example if the child is 'feeling sick' rather than having been sick or if the pupil is tired. Absences will not be authorised in circumstances such as these. These days can have a great impact on a child's attendance figures and develop a poor work ethic for later years. We will contact you if your child becomes ill during the course of the day.

Unauthorised absence can eventually lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

While any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parent and child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or Education Welfare Officer.

A chart of procedures for different percentages of attendance is attached to this policy and a copy is displayed in school, on our attendance board and in the parents' noticeboard.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. From September 2015, this figure will become 10%,

so a pupil with an overall attendance of 90% will be considered a persistent absentee. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform parents/carers immediately.

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

All our PA pupils and their parents will be subject to an action plan which may include the involvement of additional support through the Education Welfare Officer or School Nurse. We may also use class discussion time, individual targets and participation in activities around raising attendance.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent the parent/carer **must** follow these procedures:

- Contact us by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of absence **before 8.50am**
- Call in to school and report to the school office

It is unacceptable to send messages about absences with other children. These will be followed up by school. Any absence must be reported by an adult.

If you do not report an absence we will:

- Telephone the parent/carer on the first day of absence.
- In the event of not being able to speak to the parents, we will telephone the child's emergency contacts.
- If the child who is absent is a Child in Need or subject to a child protection plan, then Children's Services will be contacted immediately, in line with our Child Protection policy

An absence that is not reported will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents will be invited to discuss absences with the Headteacher if they persist or if they move towards 90%.

For pupils with attendance below 85%, an absence due to illness must be accompanied by medical consent.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Parents are expected to work with school at an early stage of attendance difficulties and to co-operate with staff in resolving problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, they can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. Our named EWO, Dawn Westerby, telephone number 01670 623027.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss vital information and news, the introduction to a lesson, sections of work and establishing social relationships with their classmates. They can have difficulty bonding with the other children. Late arrival disrupts the education of all pupils. It can be embarrassing for the child, which may encourage further absence.

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

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect our children to be in the classroom for this time. Children may arrive in the classroom from 8.40am but will not be supervised until 8.50am.

Registers are marked by 9.00am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in then. We record the number of minutes late on the child's computerised attendance record.

At 9.20am the registers will be closed. In accordance with regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but they can approach staff at any time if they are having problems getting a child to school on time. A letter will be sent to parents detailing the amount of time that has been lost.

We encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Holidays in Term Time

We do not authorise holiday absence in term time. DfE guidance states:

*“Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are **exceptional circumstances** based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion.”*

Any parent who intends taking children out of school for holidays must complete a request form which gives the opportunity to state any exceptional circumstances. A response will be given in writing by the Headteacher.

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents should be aware that penalty notices may be given by schools if they take their children out of school in term time.

Targets

Targets for the school will be displayed in school to encourage participation by all in reaching these. Our attendance target is 96% and we expect that parents and pupils aim to achieve at least this figure.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish absence figures and to promote excellent attendance and punctuality.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure their children attend school and arrive on time.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

The Headteacher and Governing Body are responsible for this policy and its implementation. The link governor is Lorraine Watson, who was appointed to this role in March 2015.

This policy was reviewed in March 2015 by the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body.

It will be published on the school website, be available in the policy file and a copy will be given to all parents.

Appendix

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE – Reception to Y6

Attendance	Action	Support Entitlement
98+	<i>Class Teacher</i> <i>Admin Officer</i> Encourage good attendance. Accurate up-keep of electronic register.	Termly report to parents End of year report
96 - 98	<i>Class Teacher</i> <i>Admin Officer</i> Encourage good attendance. Accurate up-keep of electronic register.	Termly report to parents End of year report
94 - 95	<i>Class Teacher</i> <i>Headteacher</i> Encourage positive attendance. Remind parents of attendance target. Note any deteriorating attendance patterns.	Continued support
90 - 93	<i>Headteacher</i> Letter home and/or ask parents to meeting.	Support for pupil in school
85 - 90	<i>Headteacher</i> 2nd letter – attendance below 85%, advising that the EWS may be involved. Meeting with parent. Attendance discussed at Pupil Progress meeting.	Meeting with a member of staff or the EWO, if a referral is made. Possible home visit from the EWO.
Below 85%	<i>Headteacher</i> <i>Education Welfare Officer</i> Letter sent to say that no further absences due to illness will be authorised without medical consent.	Continued support from school/EWO for family and pupil. Referral to School Nurse if absence is due to illness for support for pupil and family.

	EWO involvement following policy and procedures. Parental contract Sanctions	
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Pre-Reception pupils are not included in this analysis as they attend for half days only.