Linton Primary School

Attendance Policy

This policy will be reviewed in the autumn term 2023 through process of consultation with the Governing body.

Statement of Intent
Linton Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience and to contributing to our firm commitment to the safeguarding of all pupils. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with Parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Linton Primary School.

We define our key levels of attendance as:

100%	**Outstanding**
Over 97%	**Good**
96% - 97%	**Satisfactory**
Under 96%	**Unsatisfactory**
90% and under	**Persistent absentee**

PRINCIPLES
The following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:

- Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. There is a strong correlation between attendance and an individual's achievement. We know that if a pupil misses a lesson then it is harder to engage and catch up in the next lesson.
- Excellent attendance plays an important role in our ability to safeguard pupils.
- Early intervention is important in order to prevent absence from having a significant effect on progress and a pupil's attitude towards school.
- Support for pupils plays a very important part in improving attendance. There are a number of reasons why an individual's attendance may be low. As an organisation we need to know the individual pupil and their situation in order to be able to intervene effectively.
- Education for pupils and families is needed in understanding why attending school is important and how they can improve it.
- A positive learning climate is vital for promoting good attendance. Every member of staff has an important role in ensuring that pupils feel safe, welcome and valued so that they want to attend school.
- Rewards can be a motivator for many pupils and can both directly and indirectly improve attendance.

- Sanctions will be used as a last resort. Our principal aim is to encourage and reward good attendance. Where a pupil or their family are refusing to engage with their education and the support we offer, sanctions will be pursued through the Education Welfare Service.
- Targets and tracking for individuals, classes and whole school are important in promoting excellent attendance and identifying strategies which work.
- Indirect factors can play an important part in promoting attendance (such as high quality curriculum and teaching, good facilities and catering).

Parental Responsibility:
Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes and puts pupils at risk. It is the parent's' responsibility to contact the school every day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe. Parents should inform school when their child is returning. School starts at **8.45am**. All pupils are expected to arrive on time, those that arrive late must report immediately to the class teacher and where appropriate for the age of the child give a reason for lateness if the parent has not already contacted school to do so.

Role of School staff
At Linton Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance. Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and at the start of the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The admin officer checks the registers and monitors all attendance daily. Where a child is absent and no reason is given a call will be made home. All school staff will also support 100% attendance by ensuring all pupils are welcomed into school in a warm and supportive way. They will create a positive learning environment by making sure each pupil feels valued and lessons are stimulating and accessible for all pupils and this will extend to pupils who are late. We recognise that lateness in many of our children's cases is beyond their control.

School Action for Poor Attendance
Termly attendance letters will be sent home to all pupils celebrating good and outstanding attendance. Letters will be sent home more frequently highlighting concerns where attendance levels have dropped, following discussion with the EWO and at the discretion of the Headteacher where exceptional circumstances are involved. Concerns are highlighted in a letter where attendance drops below 95%.

- 95% - letter 1 will be sent to parents drawing attention to the drop in attendance or a discussion held with parent/carer.
- 93% - letter 2 will be sent to parents asking them to an attendance meeting, where a commitment to improve will be discussed. This will outline what the pupil, parents and school can do to improve attendance. It will also be stated that no further absences will be authorised unless medical or other evidence is provided.
- 90% - The pupil becomes a persistent absentee and will be referred to the EWO (barring exceptional circumstances)

Referral to the Education Welfare Officer:
If there are ongoing concerns with a pupil's attendance and should it fall below 90% despite support from school, the case will be referred to the EWO. Where a pupil has a poor attendance history they may be referred to the EWO at an earlier point if attendance begins to drop.

Meetings with parents/ Education Welfare Officer:
Where concerns have been identified during regular monitoring meetings the school will invite parents to a meeting, usually with the Education Welfare Officer in attendance, to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them; this will include but is not exclusive to medical evidence for absences.

Children Missing Education
No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.
Please see circumstances below: Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:
• If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
• The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school. See the Safeguarding Policy for more details.

Expectations of the School
Regular communication with parents about the importance of excellent attendance and their child's individual pattern is vital in promoting attendance. This will be done through reports, parents' evenings and letters as well as phone calls for specific issues to highlight absence.

Rewards
Excellent attendance shall be rewarded as part of the school rewards system. 100% attendance for each half term shall be rewarded as well as weekly attendance for classes and individuals.

Punctuality
We expect pupils to arrive on time every school day. A pupil will be deemed late if they arrive at school after morning registration but before 9.00am. At 9.00am the register will close and pupils will be marked as having an unauthorised late. If a pupil is regularly late this may result in a referral to the EWO as lateness impacts on overall attendance unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Authorising Absence

Leave of absence:
The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends regularly. There is no automatic right for a parent to take their child out of school in term time. Any time out of school is detrimental to learning. The Headteacher will only grant leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence form must be completed and returned to the school at least two weeks in advance of any proposed absence.

If a parent removes their child from school without requesting or being granted leave of absence, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority.

Unauthorised Absence:
All registers will close at 9.00 am and 1.05 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration and this will count as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness after the register has closed will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

If absence is frequent or continuous school will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their pupil's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised.
The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Headteacher**.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 1 week**, the absence will remain unauthorised. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school on the first day of absence. Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances".

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel either returning from a tour of duty abroad or about to be posted abroad where the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a member of the family or person close to the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Headteacher can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Internal or Post-Registration Truancy:
This occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education leading to significant gaps in learning, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's primary carers on their contact list and call the police.

Collaboration between Parents and Carers and school:
It is recognised that outstanding attendance at a young age is more likely to continue as a pupil moves through their school career, while poor early attendance is likely to lead to persistent absence later on and to be a bad influence on younger siblings.

Headteacher:	S.J. Mason	Date:	October 2022
Chair of Governors:	E. Wood	Date:	October 2022