



Policy for Attendance & Punctuality

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance at school or alternative provision is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities. Children with regular absence miss continuity of teaching and learning and their progress can be significantly impaired. Rightly, parents hold the school to account for the quality of education provided. Likewise, the school will hold parents to account for supporting children's learning and ensuring they come to school promptly each day and do not take time off school unless there are legitimate reasons.

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... to his/ her age, ability and aptitude, and ... to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child's attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school.

The definition of 'parent' includes all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/ or care for a child or young person.

Guidelines

PUNCTUALITY

When children regularly arrive late to school, their education, and that of their peers, is interrupted. This affects the positive start to the day to which all our children are entitled.

- The infant classroom doors and the main junior door are opened at 8.45am. Children should come into school as they arrive on the premises. The class teachers and other members of staff will be in classrooms to greet pupils as they arrive.
- The doors will be locked, and the gate will be closed, at 8.55am. Children arriving after this time must enter school through the main entrance, where parents must sign the late book and give a reason for arriving late by choosing from the options provided on the page. These options are:-
 - Overslept
 - Transport problems
 - Enter a reason

- The register is taken at 9.00 and at 9.05 the register is closed.
- Children arriving after 9.00, but before 9.05 will be marked late (L). Children arriving after 9.05 will receive an unauthorised late mark (U).
- Children late more than 5 times in one half term will have a letter sent home, reminding them of the importance of attending school on time.
- Children may be set punctuality targets alongside academic targets.

MONITORING ABSENCE

Leftwich Primary School aims to have an attendance percentage of 96% or above. Procedures for monitoring attendance have been put in place to help us achieve our goal.

- Parents are asked to telephone before 9.00 a.m. on the first day of absence, and thereafter keep school informed. Where school has not been informed of the reason for absence, reasonable attempts will be made to contact home.
- Where attendance falls below 96%, for illness, the Headteacher may request medical evidence for any further absences. This might be in the form of a copy of a prescription or an appointment card. In these circumstances, if medical evidence is not provided further absences will be unauthorised, which may result in legal action being taken against you.
- We ask parents to make appointments for dentist etc. outside the school day wherever possible.
- In the case of any unauthorised absence, parents will receive a 'warning letter' explaining that any further unauthorised absences may lead to Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

Twice a year pupils' attendance will be categorized into a Red, Amber or Green zone and reported to parents.

- **Green Zone:** Pupils who have 96% attendance or above
- **Amber Zone:** Pupils whose attendance falls below 96% will be in this 'at risk' zone. Parents will be informed and attendance will be monitored. The Head Teacher may choose to arrange a meeting in order to support parents with improving attendance.
- **Red Zone:** Pupils whose attendance falls below 92% will be in this 'danger' zone. Parents will be contacted and attendance will be monitored closely by school and the Education Welfare Office. If significant improvements are not made, the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will call a meeting with parents to offer support with improving attendance.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The law does not, and therefore school cannot, give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any applications for leave of absence must be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Absences will not be authorised for events such as birthdays and day trips or visits that should be taken during the school holidays.

Parents must apply for leave, in writing, to the Headteacher who will send a written response within 5 school days. In the event that the holiday request is denied, the school's response will state the reason why the holiday is unauthorised and parents will be advised that they will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice if they take their child out of school.

In making a decision as to whether to authorise an absence the Headteacher will consider the nature of the absence and any exceptional circumstances.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICE

A fixed penalty notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. In cases where there is more than one poorly attending pupil in a family, Notices may be issued for more than one child. There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalty notices will be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive.
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current term. 'Persistent' means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first 5 days of exclusion.

Parents who take unauthorised holidays will be informed, in writing, that the matter has been referred to the Local Authority and that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued. Currently there is a penalty of £60 per child, per adult (i.e. £120 for two parents and one child) and this amount must be paid within 21 days. Between 21 days and 28 days, the amount payable is £120 per parent per child. If the Fixed Penalty Notice remains unpaid, this could lead to prosecution in the Magistrate's Court.

Equal Opportunities

Children with specific special needs, preventing good attendance at school, will have this taken into account if a request for additional leave is requested.

Teachers will provide school work to be completed at home only under exceptional circumstances where a child's medical condition necessitates a prolonged absence from school and whose parents or carers request it.

This policy has been approved by the Governing Body of Leftwich C P School
September 2017

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors Date: _____

Signed: _____ Headteacher Date: _____

To be reviewed: September 2018