



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Aims

We aim to ensure we have pupils with excellent attendance, arriving on time and ready to learn.

Principles

Everything we do at Loughton Manor First School is to promote our aim: *'Building a lifelong love of learning in a safe and happy school.'*

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. Even for very young children there are positive benefits to be gained from regular attendance. This includes, not only attending, but arriving on time.

We are a friendly and supportive school and always seek to work closely in partnership with parents. Part of the guidance we offer is to promote and develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

We work hard to ensure parents understand their responsibility for making sure their child attends school regularly and on time by publishing the current attendance policy on our website in addition to sending a copy to parents annually. An individual attendance report is provided to each parent at the end of Autumn and Spring Terms and a year end data sheet is part of our Report Package in July. We take a positive, supportive and encouraging approach, providing additional guidance and advice when necessary. It is essential for schools to work with local communities to remove barriers. As such, we work hard to support our families if they have reasons why it is challenging to get their children into school and we work with them to try to find resolutions.

Benefits include:

- The **continuity of learning and development** and access to the whole curriculum. Staff carefully plan every session for each child and want to take every opportunity to help them thrive. Experiences gained in one lesson are often developed further in subsequent sessions.
- The development of **good habits**. It builds in young children the idea that

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getting up and going to school is simply what you do, leading to reliability later on in their education, and in the world of work in adulthood.

- Building **secure social relationships**. These are far easier for children to build and sustain when they regularly attend.
- **Increased confidence and self-esteem**. Children who rarely miss sessions at school and come on time are more likely to feel good about themselves. This is because they know what goes on and what to expect, feel more confident with the adults and the other children, and have more opportunities to be valued and praised for their own special contribution.

Types of Absence

The majority of our pupils are of compulsory school age. This statutory school age starts the term after a child's 5th birthday. However, the principles of good attendance are true for all our pupils, and the monitoring arrangements at Loughton Manor First School apply to all our pupils, including under 5s in the Foundation Stage.

When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

A reduced timetable should only be used for medical or reintegration and not for behaviour management purposes.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- family bereavement;
- involvement in a public performance;
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis, and by agreement of the Headteacher);

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be

unacceptable.

Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Home Visits

If the school deems it necessary, staff may make home visits without notification. A home visit is likely when a child is a persistent absentee, when there is a failure to contact the school on the first day of absence, or where there is a concern regarding the child.

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, are not marked as absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes, these children are counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of the appropriate attendance code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Registers

We are required by law to register attendance twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Gates open at 08.30 and drop-offs are between 8.30am and 8.35am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked with an L indicating they are late for school. This does not apply to Nursery pupils. The DfE now state that a school register can only be open for a maximum of 30 minutes from the start of the school day. Therefore if a child arrives after 9:05am they will be marked with a U code for an unauthorised absence.

In considering attendance levels, the class register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents.

Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (eg for individual pupils, yeargroups, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence.
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers.

First Day Reporting and Response

On the first day of absence it is the Parent/Carer's responsibility to inform the school. Specific reasons why the child is absent must be supplied along with an expected date of return where possible. Vague descriptions, such as 'unwell' or 'off colour' could be deemed as unacceptable reasons for absence.

The best way to report an absence is via our dedicated email:

absence@loughtonmanor.milton-keynes.sch.uk

Parents/Carers can also call the Office before 9.00am.

Telephone: 01908 241472.

A voicemail system is in place to take messages if the call is not answered personally.

As a vigilant and caring school we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a telephone call.

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality we:

- have clear procedures – registering children as 'late' and requiring parents/carers to sign them in and leave them at the school's main reception for staff to take through to class. We lock the gates at 8.35am for FS2 and KS1, and 9.00am in Nursery.
- publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers
- balance any sanctions with positive encouragement
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality
- ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons
- follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

Monitoring Attendance

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It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality. She is supported in this by the member of the Admin Team responsible for Attendance. The Governing Board receives a termly report on attendance figures.

Every month attendance of individuals is printed off, both for that period and for attendance for that year to date. The Headteacher highlights attendance percentages using a R.A.G. system. Any pupils whose attendance is 96% or above are 'green', 90.1%-95.9% are amber and 90% and below are red. The Headteacher will monitor if this is an ongoing issue or if it is as a result of an illness within that three week period. Follow-up conversations or letters will be had with parents where it is deemed to be necessary.

Weekly class attendance will be printed every week on a Friday and the class with the highest attendance that week will receive a class certificate and the 'Top Class Attendance of the Week' trophy.

Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance by writing to the Headteacher, and any request can only be authorised where the school accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation, penalty notices may be issued where the trigger of 10 sessions (5 days) is met across a 10 week period. The sessions do not now need to be on consecutive days.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013).

Penalty Notices

Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued where there is a combination of codes, so lateness after the register, unauthorised absence or unauthorised term time leave.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

In cases of unauthorised absence parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This will state the extent of the child's absences and give parents/carers 15 days to bring about an improvement. In that time the child should have no unauthorised absences from school.

Absence for religious reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member. This will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

Recording and Reporting

SIMS Attendance is used to record absence concerns/issues, parent contracts and penalty notices. All data/information relating to absence is secure and confidential and accessible only by appropriate members of staff.

Attendance information is reported to the Governing Board termly, and to the Local Authority and DfE as part of the school's Census data returns.

Appendix 1

Attendance Ladder



Equates to:

4

SCHOOL DAYS
off each year



100%



PERFECTION

98%



IMPRESSIVE

7

SCHOOL DAYS
off each year



96%



GOOD

9

SCHOOL DAYS
off each year



95%



NEARLY
THERE

11

SCHOOL DAYS
off each year



94%



NEEDS TO
IMPROVE

20

SCHOOL DAYS
off each year



90%



CONCERNS
(referred to Educational Welfare / Persistent absentee)

30

SCHOOL DAYS
off each year



85%



SERIOUS
CONCERNS

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Parents
Children

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