

Long Knowle Primary School



# Attendance Policy

Name of Policy Writer/Amendments	Date Written/Amended	Next Review Date	Approved by Governors
Mrs J Bond	July 2023	July 2025	

Aim: Our aim is to provide a policy and framework which promotes and encourages regular and punctual attendance, in order that pupils have access to fulltime education and receive their full entitlement provided at Long Knowle Primary School.

**Objectives:**

- To raise the overall school attendance to be at least in line with national data and to improve attendance to above the national average.
- To reduce the number of persistent absentees.
- To promote a culture of punctuality and good attendance.
- To improve parental understanding of the school's expectations and for attendance and punctuality.
- To work with Wolverhampton LA officers, to improve pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To closely monitor attendance and punctuality.

**These will be achieved by:**

- Sharing this policy and procedures with parents/ carers and the school's attendance target with pupils.
- Regular meetings with attendance staff, family support officers and senior leaders. If necessary Wolverhampton LA officers.
- Monitoring and reporting attendance and absenteeism through termly governor board meetings.
- Creating reward systems for good attendance and punctuality.
- Relevant staff receiving training as required.

**The law on school attendance and right to full-time education**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

**Procedures for Attendance:**

- All doors open for pupils at 8.40a.m.
- Doors close for pupils at 8.45a.m. whereupon the bell will ring marking the official start of the day.
- The daily register is taken by the class teacher at 8.50a.m. with pupils sitting down and following class procedures.
- Teachers close registers at 8:55a.m.

- Pupils are marked present or absent. Absences are marked with 'N' for the staff responsible for attendance to complete.
- Children attending appointments during the school day will be signed out at the entrance foyer using sign in and out system and signed back in on return. (We encourage parents to make appointments outside of the school day wherever possible)

### **Procedures for Punctuality**

- Once the school gate is closed, late pupils must enter via the entrance foyer.
- Pupils who arrive after 8.45a.m. must have an adult sign them and record how many minutes late and the reason for the lateness.
- After 9.05a.m. the school staff responsible for attendance will begin to update SIMs. Monitoring of lateness will be undertaken by the attendance staff, child and family support officers and senior leaders.
- Recurring problems will lead to parents and carers being invited into school to address the concern.

(Appendix 1 and 2)

### **Procedures for Pupil Absence**

- It is a parent's responsibility to inform school of absence and subsequently, reasons for the absence.
- Parents and carers are required to contact school on each day of absence to confirm the reason of absence and its likely duration. School can be contacted from 8am and preferably no later than 9:30am

NOTE: Parents and carers who routinely fail to make contact with the school will have all absences unauthorised and may be contacted by Wolverhampton Local Authority.

- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been received, parents/ carers are contacted by 10.30a.m. via text message asking to contact school to provide a reason.
- If we do not receive a response to the text message and attendance is below 96%, a home visit may be carried out by our school's staff.

### **Pupils who cause concern**

- For parents and carers of children who have attendance below 96%, attendance is identified as causing concern. Attendance will be monitored along with actions taken and targets for attendance will be set. Where pupil's attendance is below 96% and is falling, parents/ carers will receive a letter stating current attendance and next required steps (Appendix 3).

This letter will be posted home. Monitoring of attendance is shared with parents and carers using termly attendance tables. The letter will also inform parents and carers that their child's attendance will be discussed with our Wolverhampton Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Below 96% and is falling.

- School action is discussed in the fortnightly meeting involving the Attendance staff, family support officers and senior leaders.
- The school may also inform the school nurse if absences are authorised due to medical reasons.

- If there is no further improvement in attendance, family support staff will contact the family and an Early Help Assessment may be offered. This takes the form of a letter (**Appendix 4**) to arrange a discussion, EWO and parents/ carers.

- If the Early Help Assessment is offered and refused or has no response, a DNA letter (did not attend) is sent to parents/ carers (**Appendix 5**) and if unauthorised absences continue; legal proceedings may take place. Regular meetings take place between school and EWO to monitor attendance and discuss cases.

The Headteacher will regularly update Governors with an overview of attendance and formally report to Governors termly.

### **Procedures for Monitoring and Promoting Attendance**

- Weekly attendance is celebrated in our weekly assembly and attendance percentages are displayed on our celebration board.

- The class with the highest half-termly attendance is rewarded with an attendance trophy or attendance bear (Foundation and KS1).

- The EWO promotes the importance of good attendance by participating in the induction meeting for new parents/ carers, distributing literature produced by the LA/ DfE

- Parents and carers are kept informed about attendance through the school website, school communications, noticeboards, parent/ carer evenings and pupils' annual reports.

### **Leave of Absence**

The school follows the local authority procedures when parents and carers apply for leave of absence. All applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis. For ANY leave of absence or appointment parents need to provide evidence. These can be:

- Appointment cards, prescriptions, invitations, flight information

### **Application for Leave of Absence**

#### **Any request for holiday must be requested 4 weeks prior to the holiday**

- The Parent/ carer collects leave of absence form from school reception.

- The Parent/ carer returns completed application form which is date stamped.

- The attendance staff attaches attendance information and forwards application to the Headteacher.

- The Headteacher applies approval criteria.

- The application is forwarded to the attendance staff who informs parent/ carer of outcome by appropriate letter (**Appendices 6 and 7**).

- Applications are processed within five working days.

- Leave of absence requests for children under 5 years of age will be approved as children are of non-statutory age. (**Appendix 8**)

Leave of absence that is approved = authorised absence.

Leave of absence that is not approved = unauthorised absence.

The Headteacher and Governing Board approve leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness, and significant events such as a family wedding or cultural/ religious reasons.

As decided by the Governors of the school, the Headteacher, apart from highly exceptional cases, can only authorise up to 4 days' leave of absence in an academic year.

Any further leave of absence in that academic year will not be authorised. If any further leave of absence exceeds 4 days in succession, the school will contact the Local Authority and a penalty notice may be served.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

The view of the DfE is a child should be in school for the 39 weeks of the academic year and that holidays in term time, in whatever form, are not considered to be 'exceptional' circumstances. Holidays are **not a good enough reason** for taking a child or young person out of school.

Absence from school under exceptional circumstances is slightly different from taking a holiday in term time. In deciding whether to grant a leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances', the following is considered:

- What is the normal pattern of attendance for the child(ren) whose parent/ carer is asking for a leave of absence.
- What is 'exceptional' for one family might be the norm for another family. If the request for a leave of absence is not approved by the Headteacher but the parent/ carer takes their child away, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the Headteacher may refer the matter to the local authority.

The parent/ carer is then at risk of receiving a £60 penalty notice per child per parent.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### **Non-Return from Leave of Absence**

It may occur that a child does not return within the stated period of leave of absence. Initially, normal school absence procedures are followed.

If the child has not returned within five days after the stated period of leave of absence, the following procedure is followed:

- Case referred to the EWO.
- Home visit carried out by school and/ or EWO.
- A Letter is posted to parents/ carers.

### **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Wolverhampton City Council: [attendanceandexclusions@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:attendanceandexclusions@wolverhampton.gov.uk).

The school are committed to support the City Council's Policy and Procedure on Children Missing in Education. Once these have been received the LA will commence their CME investigation procedures.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

### **Legal Sanctions:**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision to issue a penalty notice can be made by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## Monitoring the Policy for Attendance and Punctuality

- The views of parents/ carers and pupils are sought annually through questionnaires.
- The LA provides support when reviewing the policy.
- The policy is regularly updated and formally reviewed every three years or as guidelines change or are reviewed.

### Appendix 9

What does percentage attendance mean?

Parents and carers are advised that the government have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 90% and below as “persistence Absence” pupils (PA).

The table below shows the amount of learning lost against percentage attendance figures.

<u>Attendance during one school year</u>	<u>Equivalent days</u>	<u>Equivalent sessions</u>	<u>Equivalent weeks</u>	<u>Equivalent Lessons missed</u>
95%	9 days	18 sessions	1.4 weeks	45 lessons
90%	19 days	38 sessions	3.4 weeks	95 lessons
85%	29 days	58 sessions	5.4 weeks	145 lessons
80%	36 days	72 sessions	7.1 weeks	180 lessons
75%	48 days	96 sessions	9.3 weeks	240 lessons

### Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.