

# Lockington CE VC Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Date Policy Formally Agreed By Governors:	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Date Policy Becomes Effective:	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Review Date:	Summer term 2026
Person Responsible for Implementation and Monitoring:	Headteacher & Admin Officer

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### 1. Aims

At Lockington CE VC Primary school we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Achieving attendance levels of 96% or higher across the school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This policy is written within the context of both our school mission and Christian vision and values:

Our mission is to: *develop lively, enquiring minds and promote outstanding standards of achievement in a happy, safe and caring environment, based on Christian values, which encourage all to show respect and understanding of others.*

Our Christian vision is: *'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven'* (Matthew 5:16).

We recognise that good attendance is essential for high standards and pupil attainment. Attendance matters because across one year:

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

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

### The administration officer

The administration officer is responsible for:

- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues with the Headteacher

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the class teacher or Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Administrative support e.g. monitoring/compilation/analysis/reporting on attendance and exclusions.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.15am every day.

### **Education Welfare Service**

EWS are responsible for:

- Providing a dedicated Education Welfare Officer who will work with the school (as per the service level agreement)
- Supporting school staff in identifying attendance concerns and become familiar with the procedures and documents required for referring attendance concerns for the EWS
- Advising on policy, strategy and legal requirements
- Providing area Education Welfare Officers to liaise with school staff following referral to the service

### **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the school office to report their child's absence before 9.05am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Collect their child promptly at 3.30pm
- Inform the school by 3pm if their child is to be collected by anyone not normally scheduled for a particular day

### **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

#### **4. Recording attendance**

##### **Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school on each school day by 8.55am.

The register for the first session will be taken by 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.30am.

The register for the second session will be taken by 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

#### **5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

##### **Unplanned absence**

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.05am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (01430 810240), leaving a message on the school answer machine or (except for Fridays) emailing the school office.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school office in advance of the appointment.
- However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Where possible, pupils are expected to return to school after the appointment.
- The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

- A pupil who arrives late:
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Lateness and punctuality are monitored by the headteacher, admin officers and school governors

### **Following up unexplained absence**

- Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:
- Call the pupil's parent/carer by 10am on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may take a number of additional measures such as : making a home visit, phoning the additional contacts held on the school record or calling the police
- Any unexplained absence will be shared with the headteacher by 10am
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the education welfare officer

### **Reporting to parents/carers**

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via: written reports twice annually. In the case of low attendance (below 95%) parents will receive an additional letter at the end of each half term. Parents will receive a letter and personal phone call if attendance falls below 90%. A meeting may be held with the headteacher and an action plan put in place.

### **Approval for term-time absence**

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Evidence will be required for absences to be authorised.
- There is no provision for headteachers to authorise absence purely for the purposes of a family holiday and this is not an exceptional circumstance. Forms can be found on the school website or from the school office.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
- Where children are absent from school without a prior request being made to the Headteacher, the absence when it occurs cannot be authorised. The law now clearly states that no absence will be retrospectively authorised.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- The pupil has a local authority license to take part in a public performance and the school has given leave of absence
- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with the 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 person close to the family.
- To attend the wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside the above, the Headteacher consults with the principal education welfare officer prior to any authorisation being given. The principal education welfare officer will make a recommendation to the referring school.

**There is no provision for Headteachers to authorise absence for a family holiday.**

If the request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- The first half term of any academic year

- Year 6 SATS week (pupils in Year 6)
- Any time specified by the school
- Valid reasons for unauthorised absence include:
- No explanation if forthcoming from the parent/carer
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions e.g. pupil's birthday
- The pupil is on a family holiday
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation

#### **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.
- Penalty notices can be issued 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.

#### **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place where the children want to come to; that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are addressed; a place where the children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular attendance. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build and support their children's enthusiasm in attending school. Attendance is also highlighted in newsletters to parents/carers. Each child's individual attendance record is shared with parents twice annually and may be discussed in parent consultations.

All staff are made aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

#### **7. Attendance monitoring**

Lockington CE VC Primary School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are any particular groups of children whose attendance is a cause for concern



- Investigate all absences and persistent lateness
- When registers close the admin staff will check the messages and call parents of absent children where no reason has been given
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school and to provide support in removing barriers to attendance e.g. social, illness, family circumstances etc.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the administration officer and the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Signed:  (Headteacher)

Date: 20/04/23

Signed:  (Chair of Governors)

Date: 20/04/23

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day