



# The Lea Primary School and Nursery

## Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	TLC
Date of review	November 2017
Chair of Governors	Mark Collins
Headteacher	Sharon Swinson
Date of next review	November 2020



## **The Lea Primary School and Nursery**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

At The Lea, regular attendance and punctuality are seen as essential elements in ensuring children receive their full entitlement to education. If children are not in class they are deprived of the opportunities the school has to offer them. We are committed therefore to working in partnership with parents and the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to ensure lateness and absences are kept to a minimum.

#### **Our aims are:**

- To encourage and assist all children to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, with the intention of enabling them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them
- To reflect good practice in all matters concerning attendance and punctuality
- To fulfil the requirements of government regulations regarding attendance and punctuality
- To achieve lower levels of authorised and unauthorised absences than National averages.

#### **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

- The Lea offers an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed and missed when they are late or absent.
- A varied and flexible curriculum is offered to all pupils. Every effort is made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- Good attendance has a high profile in school and the class with the best attendance is celebrated in assembly – attendance bear and certificate.
- Parents are regularly reminded (via newsletters, parent consultation evenings, etc.) of the importance of good attendance and the school's target is shared with them.

- Excellent attendance awards will be presented at the end of each term for both individual pupils and the best class.
- First day calling is used for any pupils who are at risk of persistent absenteeism.
- Pupils who have been absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be reintegrated back into school upon their return.
- The Headteacher will liaise with other agencies where appropriate in supporting and assisting pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher will report to the school's governing body on attendance matters.

Further Guidance on new statutory requirements and information about penalty notices for persistent absenteeism can be found at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/f00221879/school-attendance>

## **SCHOOL**

- The Lea Primary School and Nursery expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn.
- The Lea Primary School and Nursery will work closely with parents should attendance/punctuality give cause for concern.
- It is the responsibility of the school to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- The school will monitor absenteeism and investigate where necessary.
- The Attendance Team will be involved where efforts to ensure good attendance fail.
- Pupils with excellent attendance will be celebrated in the final assembly of each term and will be nominated for a county certificate at the end of the school year.
- Parents will be contacted as soon after 9.30 am as possible on the first day of their child's absence if the school has not been notified by this time.

## **PARENTS**

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- We expect parents to inform the school as soon as possible the reason for their child's absence by letter, phone call or personal visit.
- Parents should ensure that wherever possible, medical and dental appointments are made out of school time.
- Leave of absence may only be approved in exceptional circumstances. Parents should arrange to speak with the headteacher about this.
- Parents can expect to be informed if the staff have concerns over their child's attendance or punctuality.

## **REGISTRATION**

The school gates will be opened at 8.45am and children should not arrive before this time.

The afternoon session begins at 1 o'clock for FS and KS1 and 1.15p.m for KS2. Registers are called promptly and are 'closed' at 9.05a.m and 1.05/ 1.20p.m. Pupils arriving during this time but after their name has been called on the register will have their absent mark amended to a late mark.

After registers are closed late arrivals have to report to the school office to sign the late book. The pupils will have been recorded as absent, and this will subsequently be amended on the register on receipt of a satisfactory explanation.

## **AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

Headteachers are no longer permitted to authorise a leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances (such as a family bereavement).

The Lea Primary School and Nursery uses DfE regulations to decide on how an absence is recorded.

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the pupil was absent with leave granted by the Headteacher due to exceptional circumstances.

- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause (e.g. car break-down - failure of public transport).
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for a religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- the pupil is a child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- there is a family bereavement.
- the pupil is attending an interview in connection with an application for a place at another school.
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance.

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings. (The guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in **exceptional** circumstances.)
- the pupil is shopping during school hours

#### **APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Pupils who are engaged in off-site education activities should be recorded as **approved educational activities**. For statistics these may be counted as present even though they are physically absent. A pupil should be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she is on:

- a field trip or educational visit
- a sporting activity

The key features of an approved educational activity are that they are:

- i) educational and directly linked to the school's programme of work

- ii) approved by the School
- iii) supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

#### **PROCEDURES FOR FOLLOWING UP LATENESS/ABSENCE**

- The school office will monitor attendance and notify the Headteacher of absence or punctuality which are causing concern.
- The Headteacher and the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) will consult the register, monitor attendance and agree on actions.
- If a pupil continues to be persistently or intermittently absent, or late, the Headteacher will invite the parent to attend a meeting at school.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be given individual attention. The school will work in partnership with the parents and, if necessary, the AIO, and individual strategies and targets will be put into place. These will be regularly reviewed.

#### **PENALTY NOTICES**

- We expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. In cases of persistent disregard for the importance of school attendance, the school has the right to invoke the system of penalty notices
- If a pupil has significant irregular attendance or unauthorised absence of at least 15 sessions in a term (including unauthorised holidays) the Headteacher *may* ask the Local Authority ('LA') to issue a Penalty Notice
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance
- The school will take such legal action as required to safeguard the child's right to attend school and receive their education.