



# **Leominster Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

*“Every child should attend school every day.”*

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## Introduction

Promoting good attendance and punctuality is a priority for all schools. This is achieved most effectively in situations where there is emphasis on developing good relationships with pupils and a responsiveness to their needs. We recognise that pupils who attend school regularly are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and as a school we believe regular attendance is consequently a prerequisite for pupils' achievement. Frequent long-term absence or frequent occasional absences, affects a pupil's attainment through missed lessons and experiences, and this, together with the lack of opportunity to form social relationships with his/her peers, leads to an increased pattern of non-attendance.

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

This policy applies to all pupils registered at this school and has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education. Our attendance data is reported on a termly basis to our Governing body and our Attendance Policy is reviewed annually in order to keep it updated and in line with local and national guidance/legislation. It is available on our school website or a paper copy can be obtained from the school office.

## Aims and Objectives

This policy ensures that all the staff and governors at Leominster Primary School are fully aware and clear about the actions required to promote good attendance.

- To uphold a welcoming and positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected.
- To create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality is the norm and valued by the school.
- To encourage pupils to establish their own sense of responsibility for good attendance and punctuality.
- To maintain an attendance of a **minimum of 96%**, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- To maintain parents, carers and pupils awareness of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality throughout their time at Leominster Primary School.
- To ensure clear communication within school and between school and parents.
- To improve pupils achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To establish a clear school policy which informs good practice.
- To ensure our policy includes Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

### **We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:**

- Raising the profile of good attendance and punctuality among staff, parents and pupils through awareness.
- Ensuring parents take responsibility for their child's education through regular attendance and punctuality.
- Preparing pupils with age appropriate life skills needed to be responsible for good school attendance and punctuality.
- Maintaining effective and positive communication with staff, parents, pupils and governors regarding attendance and punctuality.

- Implementing effective procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Working with families who are experiencing difficulties at home or school that may affect attendance and punctuality.
- Implementing procedures to follow up non- attendance at school.

## Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the of responsibilities which individuals have.

### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class attendance and monitoring individuals with general poor attendance, irregularities in patterns of attendance, extended periods of absence, or unusual explanations for absence offered by pupils and their parents/carers.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Informing the Learning Mentor when there are concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness and promoting the Class Attendance Space Race as a whole school approach.
- Addressing attendance at parent's evenings as a significant part of the pupil's education, expressing concerns or highlighting success.

### **Administration Staff**

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Record details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- Ensuring parents sign their children in and out if arriving late or leaving early.
- Identify pupils that are absent each day.

### **Learning Mentor**

The Learning Mentor is responsible for:

- Monitoring daily attendance of individuals with general poor attendance, irregularities in patterns of attendance, extended periods of absence or unusual explanations for absence offered by pupils and their parents/carers.
- Contacting parents if a pupil is absent and there has been no contact.
- Liaising with Student Family Support Manager regarding absence and safeguarding concerns.
- Information sharing with relevant members of staff.
- Reporting concerns to the Home School Liaison Officer.
- Sending out standard letters and texts regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Contacting parents if there are concerns about absence or punctuality and, if required, arranging meetings with the family to discuss the attendance issues further.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### **Home/School Liaison Officer**

The Home/School Liaison Officer Mr T Lewis is responsible for:

- Offering a support service to families who are having difficulties with their child(ren) attending school.
- Home visits to families that have been identified as a concern regarding attendance, lack of

- contact or punctuality problems.
- Making referrals to the Education Welfare Service at Herefordshire Council.

#### **Headteacher**

- The Headteacher is responsible for:
- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in attendance.
- Providing reports and background information as required.

## Definitions

#### **Authorised absence**

- An absence is authorised when a pupil is away from school for a genuine reason and the school has received notification from the parent or carer. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- Clear communication with school is required for medical absences along with appointment letters or cards in order to authorise medical appointments.
- Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. An absence may be granted for unplanned circumstances. For example, a bereavement of an immediate family member.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classed as unauthorised when the pupil is away from school without permission from the school. For example, absences that haven't properly been explained, arriving too late and continuous low level illness without medical consultation.
- An absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## School Procedures

The school applies the following procedures to support good attendance and punctuality:

- Effective communication about the schools expectations and attendance procedures to staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Correct registration processes.
- Consistent and systematic daily records which clearly give details of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Advise parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Challenge persistent absence and lateness.
- Work closely with families to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Unauthorise holiday absence taken during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Refer to the Educational Welfare Service any pupil whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Report on attendance statistics when requested.

### **Arrival Times**

Pupils must arrive at school on time and be ready to learn. We allow sufficient time for all pupils to arrive at their classroom ready for registration:

- Nursery (EYFS) Doors are open **8.50am – 9.00am**
- Reception (EYFS) Doors are open **8.45am – 8.50am**
- Year 1 & 2 (KS1) Gates are open **8.35am – 8.50am**
- Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 (KS2) Gates are open **8.35am – 8.50am**

Pupils arriving after this time are classed as late.

### **Registration**

- Nursery (EYFS) **9am – 9.10am**
- Reception (EYFS) **8.50am – 9.00am**
- Year 1 & 2 (KS1) **8.50am – 9.00am**
- Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 (KS2) **8.50am – 9.00am**

Each class teacher has responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance and lateness. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher in the morning by 9.00am and in the afternoon by 1.05pm (KS1) and 1.20pm (KS2). If there is a problem with SIMs, a paper register must be taken down to the office and the register is to be completed by the office staff.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used. The School and the Governing Body are registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 to safeguard all information.

### **Lateness**

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, and it can be disruptive for the teacher and other children, whilst the pupil arriving late can feel embarrassed.

Pupils must attend school on time to be given a mark for the session. The school gates close promptly at 8.50am and pupils arriving after this time have to be signed in at the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.50am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, which is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any pupil who arrives at school later than 9.15am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (Attendance code U).

Pupils who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

### **Absences**

Parents and carers must contact the school on the first day of their child's absence before 10am with full details of the reason their child is absent and each subsequent day of absence, in person, by email, by phone or by Parentmail.

Accurate information of the absence is important and if there is evidence of the contrary, the Head Teacher has the authority to unauthorised absences. All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised on the child's registration certificate.

### **First Day Contact**

We initiate a first day contact process when a pupil is absent from school and contact has not been received. After registration has closed at 9.00am office staff update registers and identify pupils who are absent. This list is passed to our Student Family Support Manager as part of the continuous approach to

safeguarding all pupils.

The Learning Mentor and Home School Liaison office will make contact with parents to check the reason for absence. This will be via a phone call home, a text message asking for contact or a home visit to speak directly to parents and check the welfare of the child. The pupil's absence will be unauthorised in this case (Attendance Code O) and expectations of contact for future absence will be set out. If there is no contact during the first day of absence and the child is absent for a second day, a home visit will be carried out and if the member of staff is still unable to speak with the parent or carer we will consider further safeguarding action.

### **Illness and other legitimate reasons**

If a pupil is unfit for school because of illness, parents must make contact on each day of absence with full details of the illness to support the school with infection prevention and control for other children and staff.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period or be a repetitive absence, the school will do all it can to send appropriate work home so they can keep up with their school work and not fall behind.

If a pupil has repeated periods of illness over the course of an academic year, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence can be an appointment card, letter from the hospital, a Doctor's note or a copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

If a pupil has been admitted to hospital we require a copy of the discharge notes before they return to school to assess if the child requires a healthcare plan.

### **Request for Absence from school for holidays**

In 2013 the Government amended the Education Regulations 2006 and ended the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays.

Request for holiday absence will not be authorised in term time unless there is clear evidence of exceptional circumstances. If you do take your child out of school without permission, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Legal Department who will take appropriate legal action against all parents with parental responsibility.

If parents believe there are exceptional circumstances a request must be put into writing to the Head Teacher.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

All staff have a responsibility to respond to attendance and punctuality within the school. Our office staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software.

The Learning Mentor carries out regular register checks of all registered pupils whilst the Home Liaison Office will make home visits where he feels they are necessary to discuss the situation. He will also make home visits where necessary if no reason for absence has been received.

Daily meetings are held between Learning Mentor, Home Liaison Officer and Student Family Support Manager to safeguard the welfare of all pupils.

Weekly meetings on a three week rota (**Week 1** - Year 5 and 6, **Week 2** - Year 3 and 4, **Week 3** – Year R, 1 and 2) are held with the Learning Mentor and Home/ School Liaison, and other appropriate members of

staff as requested to identify children with attendance concerns and implement actions:

Identified children are:

- Persistent Absentees (attendance below 90%)
- Pupils between 90-95%
- Pupils within the following groups – Looked after Children, English as Additional Language, Free School Meals, Pupil Premium, Special Educational Needs, Child Protection, Children in Need
- Pupils with 6 or more unauthorised absences
- Pupils who have returned after an unauthorised period of time
- Pupils with on-going legal proceedings

Appropriate actions are:

- Information sharing with relevant members of staff
- Letters to parents
- Texts sent to parents
- Meeting with parents to discuss attendance concerns
- Medical Evidence Requirement letter and GP consent
- Attendance mentoring for child within school
- Attendance Contract

If problems cannot be sorted out after actions and strategies are put in place, and there is no improvement with attendance, the school will refer pupils to the Legal Department at Herefordshire Council. The Legal Department can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

- Pre- EWS letter sent after 6 unauthorised absences
- Referral to the Legal Department made when a child has reached 10 unauthorised absences, or if an unauthorised holiday has been taken.

## Positive Attendance

Whilst we do a lot of work with poor attendance and punctuality we also recognise the children that have good attendance and celebrate this across the school.

- Class Attendance Space Race for the whole school.
- Weekly Attendance and Punctuality Report emailed to parents and staff.
- Monday Matters competition each week.
- Year Group Attendance Ambassadors each week.
- Full House Friday non-uniform day each term.
- Assemblies with a focus on attendance success each term.
- Certificates for children who achieve 95% or more each term.
- Certificates for children with improved attendance.
- Certificate and book token for children with 100% attendance for the whole academic year.

## Developing and Reviewing the Attendance Policy

We regularly review the schools approach to attendance and develop it accordingly through:

- Attendance analysis.
- Set attendance targets and produce detailed and useful attendance data.
- Monitor and evaluate existing procedures to improve school practices.
- Create a high profile on attendance and punctuality and raise awareness with all staff, parents



and pupils.

- Identify ways in which attendance can be usefully linked to the development of other aspects of the school, especially pupils' welfare, behaviour and achievement.
- Analyse pupil attainment with reference to attendance data and trends.

## Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school or receives an appropriate education.

Parental agreement:

- Show your child that you think school attendance is important by guaranteeing they are present every day unless they are unfit to attend.
- Ensure your child arrives on time. Arriving late can be embarrassing for your child and disruptive to the class, especially if lessons have started. Your child may miss important information which is often given at the start of the day.
- Contact the school before 10.00am on each day of absence, to inform us when your child is off school through illness, and when we can expect them back.
- Make appointments for dentist or doctor after school hours or in school holidays where possible and make sure your child returns to school after an appointment if it has to be in school time.
- Provide medical appointment cards or letters, if asked, if you cannot get an appointment out of school hours.
- To keep in touch with regular updates if there is an extended period of absence, so that school can support you and your child.

## Summary

This policy is based on the belief that a committed and consistent approach by everyone will make a difference to attendance and punctuality, and in turn support the academic and social aspects of all pupils' education whilst at Leominster Primary School. It is our duty to make a pupil's time here interesting and worthwhile, giving attention to the school environment, an emphasis on early intervention and detailed monitoring of attendance. Our success in improving attendance relies on a close involvement of staff and parents or carers in order to carefully target individual pupils both pastorally and in the classroom.

Staff Responsible:	Head teacher
Policy Reviewed;	Summer 2017
Date of Next Review:	Summer 2018

Ratified by Governors 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017

