



LATCHMERE
ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance Policy

Status	Supporting- Non Curriculum
Review Cycle	Annual
Date written/ last review	January 2023
Date of next review	January 2024

NB: Throughout this document Latchmere Academy Trust may be abbreviated to "LAT"

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Each child's attendance can be summarised in the following way:

% Attendance	NUMBER OF DAYS MISSED IN A YEAR	GUIDE TO IMPACT OF THIS
100%	0 days missed	Your child will have gained the greatest benefit from their time at school.
95%	9½ days (almost two weeks)	Your child is likely to achieve the best they can.
90%	19 days (almost four weeks)	Your child is unlikely to achieve their full potential. A referral is likely to be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) . Medical evidence may be required every time your child is off school.
85%	28½ days 5 weeks and 3½ days (approx half a term)	It will be difficult for your child to achieve their best in school; they may find it difficult to catch up with school work. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may be involved. Possible court proceedings or fixed penalty notice issued (FPN) by Local Authority. Medical evidence may be required every time your child is off school.
80%	38 days 7 weeks and 3 days (just over half a term)	Serious cause for concern. Further intervention from EWO. Possible court proceedings or fixed penalty notice (FPN) issued. Medical evidence will be required every time your child is off.
75%	47½ days 9 weeks and 2½ days (nearly one term)	Serious cause for concern. Possible court proceedings or fixed penalty notice (FPN) by Local Authority. Medical evidence may be required every time your child is off.
70%	57 days 11 weeks and 2 days (one term)	Serious cause for concern. Multi agency intervention and court action or fixed penalty notice (FPN) issued by Local Authority. Medical evidence will be required every time your child is off school.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different, and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from becoming worse. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect the child's attendance; they are informed of this obligation upon starting school via a letter from the headteacher.
- Prior to the engagement of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), the school will issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

PRINCIPALS

Arrival and Registration

All children should be in the school for registration at 9.00am (except nursery which has separate times). The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as two attendances. If a child arrives after the registration period, he/she must report to the school office and will be marked in as "late". Arrival after 9.30am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark. If your child arrives late regularly, a late letter will be sent and a possible referral to the EWO.

Parental Responsibility

Throughout this policy, the term 'parent' represents one parent, either parents or the carer with whom the child resides.

Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly via the school newsletter, which is published on the school's website. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child receives a full-time education. This is achieved by regular attendance at school.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- If your child is absent due to vomiting/diarrhoea, then they must not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY – THE LAW AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated, each regulation applies to all schools in England.

The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets, and for some governing bodies to set 'focused absence targets' as required by the Secretary of State. School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by Attendance Administration staff and the Education Welfare Service. Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.

Attendance is recorded, and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

The headteacher, not parents, authorises absence; Latchmere Academy Trust adheres to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside of school hours and medical evidence is provided.

When it has become necessary to make a referral to the EWO all further absences will be unauthorised pending investigation. The EWO liaises with the school regarding absences following contact with the parents.

Legal sanctions

In certain circumstances, the unauthorised absence of a child who is of compulsory school age can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued or court proceedings initiated. This would be actioned by the local authority in collaboration with the school.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may include:

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- When all other attempts to improve a child's school attendance have been ineffective.

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

Holiday Absence during Term Time.

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. *Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.*

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body. **Please note that completing an absent request form does not automatically result in the absence being authorised.**

The Education Welfare Service (EWS), together with the school, monitors the authorised and unauthorised absence statistics. We do not authorise any holiday absence during term time. The Headteacher is authorised to grant leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for leave of absence must be sent to the Headteacher/ attendance lead via the School Office at least fourteen school days in advance. Parents/carers will receive a timely response from school.

In certain circumstances a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for any periods of unauthorised term-time holiday comprising ten sessions /five days may be issued by the Local Authority in partnership with the school. All absences are considered on a case by case basis. (Please see Appendix 2 – Fixed Penalty Notice).

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences where no reason or no clear reason has been provided
- Holidays not agreed
- Children who have attendance data below 90% and a referral to the EWO has been made

In the event of more than five consecutive days of unauthorised absence/holiday, the school will inform the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) who will contact parents/carers directly.

Role of the Education Welfare Officer

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

Children Missing in Education

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority.

https://www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200130/education_schools_and_nurseries/1331/education_welfare_service

Persistent Latecomers

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 9.00am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children.

Review

The policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for policy review.

Appendix 1



ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

In order to maximise learning time and ensure children have access to all learning and social opportunities, we strongly encourage that parents do not plan to take pupils out of school during term time unless due to exceptional circumstances. The amended Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 clearly states that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Term time absence disrupts learning and impacts on peer relationships. Although some absences are unpredictable i.e. due to illness, learning lost due to absence cannot be replaced.

Should you feel that the absence you are requesting is due to exceptional circumstances, please complete and return this request form to the school office following which your request will be unauthorised/authorised.

Child's name : Class:

Child's name : Class:

Child's name : Class:

I/we are requesting that my/our child(ren) be absent from school as follows:

First day of absence

Date of return to school

Total number of school days requested

Reason for absence:
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed:.....Date of request.....

For school use only

Current attendance data:

Supporting letter received: YES/NO

As I am not aware of any exceptional circumstances, any absence during this period will be recorded as 'Unauthorised'.

This absence request has been authorised

Headteacher:.....

Appendix 2

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for unauthorised term-time holidays

The school will consult with the allocated EWO before submitting a referral for FPN

If the school is seeking issue of an FPN for term-time holidays, the request should be emailed to ews.fpn@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Each request must be accompanied by a completed FPN checklist - FPN checklist for term time holidays as well as a registration certificate to cover the offence period, which must be signed and dated by the Headteacher.

This service must not be used for any other persistent absence matters.

These requests must be sent through to the SPA as a persistent absence referral, at which point EWS will determine if it meets threshold and/or whether it is appropriate to issue an FPN.

Each request will be assessed on a case by-case basis for persistent absence.

All schools, before seeking to issue an FPN, must ensure that a consultation with parents/carers has been held and that governors are in agreement with the school in implementing this action.

Whilst it is the EWS that issues these, they cannot determine the issuing of FPNs for holidays. Schools looking to implement FPNs for holidays should ensure that they have reached a decision that is in line with their own process.