



LEIGHSWOOD

SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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LEIGHSWOOD SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

ATTENDANCE FIGURES

The Government has set attendance targets for pupils at school. Our targets are:
“For all pupils to achieve a minimum of 96.1% attendance.”

All schools are required to publish figures for authorised and unauthorised absence from school. We are trying to reduce our unauthorised absence by contacting parents each morning if their child is absent from school. We also send a copy of your child’s attendance certificate with their school report and separately each term.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Only the Head Teacher, on behalf of the governing body, can authorise absence from school. Absence can only be authorised for the following reasons:

Authorised:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments, such as at hospital
- Recognised religious observance
- Funerals
- Traumatic events

Holidays during term time are not permitted. This is because the Department for Education changed the law in September 2013 and no longer allows Head Teachers to grant holiday leave.

If there is a reason for absence that is not covered by the above list and could be considered ‘exceptional circumstances’ then parents/carers must request the leave in writing, using the form, called “Request for leave of absence during term time” , giving detailed information about why the absence is required.

If the school refuses a request for term time leave, yet the child is taken out of school regardless, this will be noted as ‘unauthorised absence’. This will then be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a fixed penalty notice.

What is unauthorised absence?

- Holidays
- Any absence when no reason is given
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Looking after other family members
- Taking children to appointments when it is only related to one child
- Waiting in for trades people
- Unapproved sporting events
- Visiting relatives
- Getting up late
- Missing the bus
- Poor weather – unless authorised by the school
- Days out

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE AND OTHER AGENCIES

We have weekly visits from the Educational Welfare Officer to discuss any pupils with absence or punctuality concerns. The EWO reviews the class registers and makes home visits to discuss any issues with parents and then takes the necessary action. During such visits, the EWO may have other child concerns and would contact the appropriate agencies.

If a child’s absence is below 90%, it enters the category of ‘persistent absence’ and will be monitored closely by school and the EWO. The EWO will invite parents into school to a parents’ meeting to discuss ‘persistent absence’ and punctuality issues. At the meeting we will discuss how school can support parents to improve their child’s attendance..

If your child is absent from school because of illness, please bring in medical evidence; eg from a pharmacy, walk-in-centre, GP or hospital. Key Stage offices have a form available which can be stamped for this purpose. If your child’s attendance is below 92%, the absence will not be authorised unless medical evidence is produced.

If a child is reported to have a recurring illness, the school will suggest a meeting with the School Health Advisor. We work very closely with the EWO, School Health and Child Welfare Agencies to resolve matters. We also liaise with our local Secondary Schools, checking if siblings are absent, in order to resolve any issues.

Walsall Children’s Services (Educational Welfare) may issue fixed penalty fines to parent/carers who take holidays in school time or when a child is persistently absent from school without just cause. Current charges are £60.00 per person* for each period of unauthorised absence. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days, this will rise to £120. Education Welfare is likely to prosecute if fines are not paid.

*Payable for each child and each parent

Example: 2 parents with 2 children could incur a fixed penalty of £240.00 if paid within 28 days.

Letters issued by Educational Welfare

The EWO will send letters home to parents advising them that their child's attendance needs to improve and the consequences of there being no improvement. Although rare, it may sometimes be necessary for the school and the EWO to take court action, which could result in a fine of up to £2500 or a 6 months prison sentence.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCE

Absence and Late Book

An absence book is kept at Reception to log any messages received from parents/carers explaining their child's absence. A late book is also kept at Reception in order to monitor pupils who arrive after the close of Registration. The registers are then amended with the necessary mark for lateness, illness, medical appointment etc. The EWO will send letters to parents where persistent lateness is an issue.

First Day Contact

First day contact texts are made to all parents/carers if the school has not received a reason for their child's absence. If we try to ring a family and the 'first contact' is unavailable, the School will then proceed to get in touch with the other contacts as authorised on the child's Emergency Contact Record.

If we have any concerns regarding absence or we are unable to make contact, then the Education Welfare Officer is informed.

SAFEGUARDING

If poor attendance prompts any further child concerns then the **Safeguarding Procedures** are followed and the Head Teacher, who is our Designated Lead for Child Protection, is advised immediately. Also, as part of our Safeguarding Policy our Designated Lead for Child Protection is advised if an 'at risk' or 'looked after' child is absent. They will then deal with the matter as necessary. Attendance for these pupils, children entitled to pupil premium funding and SEN pupils are regularly monitored.

REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We appreciate parents and pupils who understand the importance of regular attendance and enjoy rewarding their achievements. Therefore, pupils who have 100% attendance for the term are awarded certificates. All pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the year receive a special prize.

WEEKLY BEST CLASS ATTENDANCE

A trophy and certificate are awarded to the Class with the best weekly attendance during our Celebration Assembly. The best class will also have extra play on the "trim trail." When a class has 100% attendance during a week, every child in the class receives a prize from the 'golden box'. At the end of the term, the class who has had the best weekly attendance the most times in Nursery/Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 has a special reward. We display the running total of class winners at each key stage so children can see how their class is performing.

In addition, all the children who have had 100% attendance during the previous week are entered into a weekly draw. A winner is selected from each key stage and the lucky winner receives £5.

PUNCTUALITY

We believe that good punctuality is a vital part of the education of each child. Good habits learnt at an early age can only benefit your child in later life. Punctuality is important at every stage of education; from our two year old and Nursery provision to Year 6. Education Welfare closely monitor punctuality and will contact parents of children who are persistently late. Arriving late to school has a serious effect on your child's education. Please consider the following:

- The child arrives flustered, worried and unprepared to start their lessons
- They miss the vital introduction to their lesson and maybe precision teaching which takes place at the beginning of the school day
- Their late arrival disrupts the rest of the class
- They are not included on the Lunchtime Register which is taken at the same time as the Attendance Register. This is used to make dinner arrangements and your child may be omitted.

We recommend that children arrive in the School playground in good time to enable them to enter school with their class and begin Registration promptly, 8.45 in KS2, 8.55 in Reception and KS1, 9.00 (am Nursery) and 12.45 (pm Nursery).

THE ROLE OF PARENT/CARERS

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- ✓ Encourage and help your child to attend school on time every day
- ✓ Contact us if you are having problems getting your child to school. We are here to help!
- ✓ Take your family on holiday during school holiday time
- ✓ Try and avoid having medical and dental appointments during the school day.

HOW CAN YOU HELP WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ILL?

- ✓ Notify school immediately (on the first day) if your child is absent from school for any reason
- ✓ Always provide school with proof of any medical appointments.