



# Lanesend Primary School

## Attendance Policy

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Chair of Trustees

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# Lanesend Primary School

## Attendance Policy

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### **1: Rationale and Statement of Intent:**

Lanesend Primary School is committed to ensuring that all our children receive a full-time education so that they can take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. We strive to ensure that our school provides a safe, secure and peaceful community in which children can learn and progress.

Good attendance is important because:

- Every child has the right to a full-time education (UNCRC Article 28: Every child has a right to an education);
- Every pupil has the right to access the widest opportunities to support their development (UNCRC Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full);
- Research\* has found that 'poor attendance at school is linked to poor academic attainment across all stages as well as anti-social characteristics and negative behavioural outcomes. However, evidence suggests that small improvements in attendance can lead to meaningful impacts for these outcomes'.

Our school values of '*Loving Learning, Belonging – Pride – Respect*' are reflected in our encouragement of excellent attendance. To 'love learning', children need to be present at school so that they can access learning. Missing sessions and arriving late not only disrupts learning, impacting on children's progress and achievements. Absence also puts barriers in place for children to feel a sense of belonging, making it harder to have pride in and respect for their learning.

Lanesend Primary School will establish a clear and effective system of communication, working closely with children, families and appropriate agencies to reach positive outcomes for children's attendance:

- To promote excellent attendance and punctuality;
- To act promptly to reduce absence and lateness;
- To aim for 100% attendance for every child so that all children have access to full-time education.

## 2: Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality:

Good attendance is fostered through a strong partnership between families, children and the school. To encourage good attendance, the school will:

- Celebrate good attendance in assembly;
- Sharing and celebrating each class's weekly attendance in the newsletter;
- Teach children about the importance of being an attendance **HERO** – **H**ere, **E**very day, **R**eady, **O**n time and embedding this across the school;
- Emphasise the importance of attendance in relation to loving learning and making progress.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents, academies and Local Authorities (LA's) share legal responsibility for educational attendance.

- **Parents/Carers** are responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age, receives a suitable full-time education and for families who have chosen to register at Lanesend Primary School, this means that children must attend here regularly and punctually. As such, parents should strive to ensure any medical or dental appointments are arranged outside the school day. Where this is not possible, evidence of the appointment must be provided.

When a child is absent, parents must inform the school before 9am following the guidance on page 4 '**Absence Reporting Procedures**'. If a child is registered as absent and a reason has not been provided, the school will endeavour to contact parents. Parents must make sure that there is at least one additional emergency contact number which can be used to enquire about absences and that this is kept up to date.

If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents should inform the school so that any concerns or issues can be addressed.

- **The School** will ensure that there is an attendance register for all children at the start of the school day and the afternoon session. The school will:
  - Find out the reason for absence;
  - Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised;
  - Record the absence using the correct code;
  - Ensure that the correct safeguarding procedures are followed when appropriate;
  - Meet with and work with parents to aim to improve attendance;
  - Report absences to parents termly;
  - Work with the appropriate agencies as required.
- **Children** are encouraged to recognise the importance of good attendance and arriving at school on time in an age-appropriate way.
- **The Trustees** will be regularly informed about attendance rates in terms of groups of pupils (no individuals are identified). Their role in the analysis of attendance data and promotion of good attendance is key.
- **The Headteacher** is responsible for co-ordinating, authorising and implementing this policy. They are also responsible for authorising a pupil's absence.
- **Teachers** are responsible for ensuring that children are registered correctly, in line with this policy. They will promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities and liaise with senior leaders on matters of attendance and punctuality. Teachers will also communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence and support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.
- **The Local Authority** and school have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. Local authorities also have other powers to enforce school attendance should this be needed, including the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order, or fail to ensure their child's

regular attendance at school.

#### **4. Recording Attendance:**

All absences are recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Each day has two sessions which need to have attendance recorded. Codes for all absences can be found in Appendix.

##### **Understanding Authorised and Unauthorised Absences:**

The decision about whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised lies with the Headteacher.

- An authorised absence means that the reason given for the absence has been accepted as a satisfactory justification or when approval has been given in advance.
- An unauthorised absence means that no reason for absence has been received or that the reason given has not been approved. This includes:
  - Parents giving their children permission to be off for reasons such as birthdays, shopping or to look after siblings;
  - Truancy before or during the school day.

Authorised absences may be changed to unauthorised absences if further information is received. See Appendix A for information about authorised and unauthorised absence codes.

##### **Punctuality and Lateness:**

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. Ongoing repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

Children are late if they arrive after the gate has shut. Their lateness is recorded as unauthorised if they arrive more than 20 minutes after the gate is shut.

Gates shut at the following times:

- YR, Y2 and Y3 – 8:30 (*unauthorised from 8:50*)
- Y1, Y4, Y5 and Y6 – 8:35 (*unauthorised from 8:55*)

If children are late, they need to enter school through the school reception where they will need to record the time they arrive, give a reason for lateness and sign in. The reason and the minutes late are recorded on SIMS, the school information management system.

When lateness is taking place regularly, parents will be invited into school for an attendance meeting which will be recorded on the '**School Attendance Meeting Record**'.

If children are frequently arriving late, the parent is committing an offence by failing to ensure that the child is receiving full time education and the parent may therefore be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted under the Education Act 1996, Section 444.

#### **5. Absence Reporting Procedure**

**Parents:** should only allow their children to miss school if they are either too ill to go in or they have received advance permission for a leave of absence. When there is an unplanned absence, the procedure which needs to be followed is:

- Day 1: Parents must message using 'Study Bugs', email or phone the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence as soon as possible;
- Continued days of absence: Parents should continue to message, email or phone the school on every day of absence until the child returns to school.

When the child returns to school, a written reason should be given to school which e.g. details the nature of the illness.

**The school:** will make contact with parents if no reason has been given for a child's absence by 9am. If no contact is made after repeated attempts, a home visit may be carried by members of our TAC

team in line with our Safeguarding (with Child Protection) Policy.

After three days of absence with no contact from parents, the school is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child, including making enquires to known friends, wider family and a home visit will be conducted.

After 10 consecutive days of absence, we have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent, then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

## **6. Requesting a Leave of Absence (LOA)**

If parents wish to request an authorised absence, a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' must be completed and submitted. Absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher and a minimum of three weeks' notice should be given between the date the form is returned to school and the beginning of the absence. Absences can only be authorised for exceptional circumstances.

Applications for leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and the number of days given will be determined by the Headteacher, in consultation with other services/settings when appropriate. A 'standard' family holiday in term time will never be classified as exceptional circumstances as the DFE guidance states that parents should not take children on holiday in term time.

Where absence is requested for a medical or dental appointment during school time, evidence of the appointment needs to be provided for the absence to be authorised and children will be expected to attend school prior to or after the appointment.

The definition of 'exceptional' is rare, significant or unavoidable, which means the event could not be scheduled at another time. The parents' definition of exceptional may differ to the Headteachers' and exceptional circumstances may not authorise the full leave of absence requested.

The decision Headteacher's decision on exceptional circumstances is final.

**Absence for through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling performance:** Parents may seek LOA for their child to take part in performances. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with parents the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Parents must complete a LOA request and the Headteacher will then meet with them to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence.

**Absence for competing at regional, county or national level for sport:** Parents may seek LOA for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with parents the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for children to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

## **7. Supporting Children with Medical Conditions**

Lanesend Primary School recognises that some children may have high absences due to medical conditions. Our 'Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy' sets out our approach to children with such needs.

## **8. Persistent Absence**

Children become persistent absentees if they miss 10% or more of schooling, whatever the reason for their absence, authorised or unauthorised. Being absent persistently leads to educational disadvantage, leading to gaps in children's learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance

falls below 95%.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Persistent absenteeism will be monitored closely by TAC Team who will invite parents/carers to a school attendance meeting (SAM) to address the reasons for absence with the aim to improve the child's attendance.

For children who are persistently absent, medical evidence will be required for all absences for illness. If attendance does not improve, then legal measures for non-attendance may be pursued.

## **9. Legal Measures for Non-Attendance**

Whilst the school prioritises working with families and supporting parents to enable good attendance, there are a range of legal measure available to support the school to secure good attendance which will be used when necessary. In education law, parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised.

Legal measures will only be considered when there is an unauthorised absence and the child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting Orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

### **Penalty Notices:**

Lanesend Primary School may request the LA issues a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- Absent for 10 or more half-day sessions of unauthorised absence (G, U or O) during any 100 possible school sessions. These do not need to be consecutive.
- Persistently late (coded U) for 10 or more sessions after the register has closed.
- Absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance, unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.
- Absent for 10 or more sessions when a LOA request has been applied for but has been refused. Parents will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via the letter which informs parents that the LOA request has not been authorised.

The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. The school will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parents/carers for each child.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid, the LA will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. If convicted, there are a number of possible sentences, including a fine of up to £1000 (under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a period of up to three months imprisonment under section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to LA and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay. There is no statutory right of appeal. Once a penalty notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it is shown that it was issued in error.

### **Attendance Legal Panels:**

The LA, will, through its ALPs, carry out its responsibility to act on behalf of its schools under *Section*

*443: failure to comply with school attendance order and Section 444: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil;* of the Education Act 1996. In addition, the County Council's Legal Intervention Team will also process Education Supervision Orders – Section 447 Education Act 1996; and School attendance orders – Section 437 Education Act 1996. The panel is made up of representatives from the Education and Inclusion Service, Headteachers, an Early Help Hub managed and legal representatives and chaired by the district manager of the Children and Families' branch.

The aim of the ALP is to consider if it is appropriate to pursue legal action on cases presented by schools and to ensure that the evidence provided is robust and unambiguous enough to be presented in court. They take place monthly (except August).

If prosecution is agreed to be appropriate, the Attendance Legal Panel referral form is completed and sent to the appropriate Early Help Hub. The referrer will then be given a time and date to attend the panel in order to present the case.

#### **School Attendance Orders:**

If the LA identifies that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing School Attendance Order under section 437 of the Education Act 1996. Failure to comply with this may lead to prosecution.

#### **Education Supervision Orders:**

The local authority must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting parents under section 447 of the Education Act 1996. A local authority may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. The order is placed on the child and the local authority is appointed by the court to supervise that child's education, either at a school or academy, or at home for a specified period of time.

#### **Parenting Contract:**

A Parenting Contract is a formal, written agreement between parents and either the local authority or the trustees and contains:

- A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract
- A statement by the local authority or school trustees agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract. Parenting Contracts are agreed at Education Planning Meetings at Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels and can be used in cases of serious misbehaviour or irregular attendance at school or alternative provision.

Parenting Contracts are voluntary, but any non-compliance will be recorded by the school/academy or local authority as it may be used as evidence in court where an application is made for a Behaviour Parenting Order.

#### **10: References and Related Policies:**

- \* EEF Attendance interventions rapid evidence assessment March 22
- Safeguarding (with Child Protection) Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- DFE Guide to Attendance for Parents: [Working Together to Improve Behaviour](#)

## Appendix - Attendance Codes:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site at a supervised activity approved by the academy. (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity - present
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description e.g. performance)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity – present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence (up to 2 weeks)	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity - present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity - present
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity - present
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Not required to be in school	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances