

# Attendance Policy

The Littletons CE First School



## SCHOOL VISION:

Just as God has created every individual with unique talents and skills, our school community provides a nurturing and inclusive environment, where everyone is encouraged to explore their individual creativity and to confidently use their talents in order to achieve their God given potential and to make the world a better place.

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school

- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Paul Jones and can be contacted via (01386) 830695

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is [insert name] and can be contacted via [telephone number and/or email address].

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office daily, during morning and afternoon registration times.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:20am on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:20pm and will be kept open until 1:50pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:20am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school /office staff (see also section 7) via (01386) 830695, [office@thelittletons.dowmat.education](mailto:office@thelittletons.dowmat.education), or through Class Dojo. Telephone messages can be left prior to school telephone lines opening.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should request a leaves of absence form from the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be through parents evening meetings and school reports.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The Government has introduced a single national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160, to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, it will be charged at a flat rate of £160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance.**

Part payments or payment plans are not an option and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

A maximum of 2 Penalty Notices per parent, per child, can be issued within a 3-year rolling period. This period will start from the issue of the first penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. This is likely to be forwarded to the Local Authority for their consideration to prosecute under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 which can result in criminal conviction and a fine of up to £2500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for leave of absence).

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority, not by individual schools. Any payments go directly to the Local Authority to cover the cost of issuing the Penalty Notices or prosecuting parents – schools do not receive any part of the payment and are not involved in the legal process.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We celebrate good attendance through half-termly class awards, displayed on the school newsletter, and through meetings with parents/carers at parents' evenings. Class Dojo may also be used to celebrate whole school or individual good attendance.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

## 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders (including DSLs), to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- › Send initial letters explaining that attendance needs to improve
- › Send follow-up letters as required, stating whether or not attendance has improved
- › Arrange meetings with parents/carers if attendance does not improve

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE publication 'Working together to improve school attendance' and are effective from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Code	Meaning	New Code
Code / \:	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session	
Code L:	Late arrival before the register is closed	
Code K:	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Yes
Code V:	Attending an educational visit or trip	
Code P:	Participating in a sporting activity	
Code B:	Attending any other approved educational activity	
Code D:	Code D: Dual registered at another school	
Code C1:	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Yes
Code M:	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	
Code J1:	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Yes
Code S:	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	
Code X:	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	
Code C2:	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Yes
Code C:	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	
Code T:	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	
Code R:	Religious observance	
Code I:	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	
Code E:	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	
Code Q:	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Yes
Code Y1:	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Yes
Code Y2:	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Yes
Code Y3:	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Yes
Code Y4:	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Yes
Code Y5:	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Yes
Code Y6:	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Yes
Code Y7:	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Yes
Code G:	Holiday not granted by the school	
Code N:	Reason for absence not yet established	
Code O:	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	
Code U:	Arrived in school after registration closed	
Code Z:	Prospective pupil not on admission register	
Code #:	Planned whole school closure	