



Litherland Moss Primary School

Attendance Policy

Amended Sept 2020

LITHERLAND MOSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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LITHERLAND MOSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2020/21

Our attendance officers are Mrs Bennett & Mrs Hill (first day response), Mrs Sears (monitoring), Mr Towler (Assistant Headteacher) and Mr Donnelly (attendance governor)

Introduction

We are committed to providing high quality education in a safe and secure environment. We enable and encourage all members of the community to reach out for excellence.

We ensure a welcoming and inclusive ethos where every child enjoys the freedom to learn unimpeded.

We provide a secure environment where children are encouraged at all times by staff and peers to attend daily. In this atmosphere your child will be helped to develop self-motivation and recognise and understand the importance of good attendance.

A positive, proactive whole school / children's centred approach will be taken to promote excellent pupil attendance. All staff will share responsibility for supporting children and ensuring maximum attendance. Mutual support will assist the successful implementation of our policy.

It is very important therefore that parents make sure that children attend everyday and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

School Targets

- The school has targets to improve attendance. Parents/carers and children have an important part to play in meeting these targets
- The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% for 2020/21 and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.
- Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide a safe, engaging and nurturing environment, which the children want to attend every day.
- Make 'first response' contact with you on the morning of first absence.
- Keep in regular contact thereafter to offer support in getting the child back into school as quickly and safely as possible.
- Conduct unannounced home visits where necessary.
- Follow local authority procedures regarding persistent and unauthorised absences.
- Where appropriate, speak to the child on return to school regarding reason for absence.
- Reward and celebrate the children and classes with daily and weekly high attendance.
- Individual Attendance Award celebrations held termly.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child is on the playground by 8.45am each day.
- Ensure that their child is collected or goes home alone (only when written consent received for Y6 pupils) promptly at the end of school.
- Contact school on each day of absence by 8.30am either by phone, or in person.
- Arrange dental, doctor or hospital appointments outside the school day except in an emergency.

The Role of the Governing Body

- The governing body must ensure that school registers are kept; one for admissions and one for attendance.
- The governing body is required to agree the annual attendance target for the school.
- The school attendance officer will report Termly to the governing body with whole school attendance
- The School attendance Governor will meet with the School Attendance Officer half Termly and will assist with any School Attendance Panels (SAP)

Understanding Types of Absence

Any pupil who is not present in the school must be classified by the school (not the parents) within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This type of absence can lead to the local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. This includes mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like:

- illness
- medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time,
- emergencies or other unavoidable cause

3. Approved Educational Activity

This category covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

It is ultimately the responsibility/discretion of the headteacher to authorise any absences.

If the Head Teacher and/or School Attendance Officer are concerned about a child's absence the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.

Holidays during Term Time

The Government made changes in September 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

The amendments make it clear that headteachers may no longer grant leave of absence for family holidays during term time. Consequently, from 1 September 2013 **The Head Teacher will not authorise absence requests for family holidays.** Any holidays taken by parents may result in a penalty notice being issued by Sefton Council, resulting in a fine. **(See appendix 5)**

We hope all parents understand the school has to follow legislation and that you will continue to support us in this matter.

Persistent Absentees (PA)

A child goes onto this list if they have missed 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing harm to a child's educational prospects and therefore support from parents is needed to tackle this. All children on the PA list are contacted and a meeting is set up with the SAO or headteacher to discuss the attendance plan and create a successful strategy.

All PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

Any child who is reluctant to attend school is supported by the school alongside parents/carers to address the reasons and to aid a swift return to school.

Punctuality

Punctuality is valued in the school but the presence of a pupil is valued higher. Most children arrive late in school because of home circumstances.

If a child arrives late it is the role of the teacher to praise the child for getting into school rather than chastising them for being late.

The pastoral team will monitor intensively any persistent pupil who is late and inform the headteacher. There may also be a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

If you are experiencing any difficulties with a child's attendance, please contact Mrs. Sears or Mrs Bennett on 0151 928 4544

School Procedures

1. Registration

Years R-6:

Years R-6 use an electronic registration procedure

All Staff log onto SIMS at 8.45a.m ready for morning register

Registers are to be completed by 9.00a.m- using the following codes:

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
	Absent

*** It is important that class teachers do not enter any other codes**

All staff must save and log off SIMS at 9.00a.m

Mr Towler and Mrs Bennett will receive and review all class attendances between 9.00a.m and 9.30a.m

It is the responsibility of the classteachers and pastoral team to insert reasons for absences after completing first day response.

Staff should follow the above procedure for afternoon registers completing their register by 1.00p.m

Mrs Bennett will receive and review all class attendances between 1.00p.m and 1.30p.m

Staff should inform pastoral team if a reason has been given prior to a child's absence and record in the message book and send it to the office daily with the dinner register.

Any difficulties using SIMS should be reported immediately to the pastoral team and headteacher.

Print out of class registers will be taken to playground during fire procedures.

*** In the event of staff being unable to log on/access SIMS, they must inform the office at the earliest point. Staff will then be issued their register to complete manually.**

Late Arrivals

- Children arriving after 8.55am should report to the school office. The Parent/ Carer and/or appropriate member of staff should sign them in.
- If reason is known for why a child will be arriving late, e.g. dental appointment, Staff should inform pastoral team
- If reason for late arrival is unknown, class teachers should mark the child as absent and the pastoral team will follow up.
- Occasionally school may provide transport to collect any child who is late.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times.

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to ensure that up to date contact details are provided throughout the school year.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as **Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.**

Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is **0151 934 3359**

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into the habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90%: 19 days absence a year

Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.

85%: 29 days absence a year

The Government classes Young People in this group as 'Persistent Absentees', and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. **Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.**

Appendix 2

Parental responsibility

The term 'parent' refers to one parent, both parents and or the child's carer. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (the parent can elect to educate their child at home).

*The expression "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for him or her, or who has the day to day care of the child.

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from age five when a child should attend school from the start of the term commencing on or after his fifth birthday. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

Appendix 3

First Day Contact Guidelines

- As soon as the registers are returned to the office, staff checks absentees against messages received.
- For other pupils for whom no message has been received, staff will attempt to make contact with the parent at the earliest opportunity.
- When contact is made, the parent will be asked for the reason for absence. In the event that no proper reason is supplied, the parent will be informed that the absence will not be authorised.
- In the case of minor ailments, the parent will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school will keep a close eye on him/her. (NB – if there has been a spate of certain symptoms in the school or community, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence).
- Where no contact is made, a message will be left asking the parent to contact the school. Where it is impossible to leave a message, a note may be sent.
- The school attendance officer may carry out a home visit
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our pastoral team and/or headteacher if absences persist;
- Invite you to attend a 'School Attendance Panel' if your child's attendance is of concern or your child's attendance drops to 96% or below.
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer if attendance is below 90% and/or you fail to attend the 'School Attendance Panel'.
- Refer to the Attendance and Welfare Service to set up penalty notice proceedings

Appendix 4

The Legal Foundation of this policy is found in Education Act 1996

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Section 444 further states that: The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law. An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

The pupil was absent with leave agreed by school staff; (authorised absence)

The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause;

The absence was on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs;

The school is not within walking distance of the child's home and the LA has made no suitable arrangements for: $\frac{3}{4}$ the child's transport to and from school; ("walking distance" is defined in section 444(5) of the Education Act 1996).

The law relating to 'walking distance' effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under age eight and three miles for all other pupils. 5.21 Since March 2001 there has been a more serious offence where a parent who, knowing that his child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him to attend (Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). This amendment was introduced to provide another, more serious offence which requires proof that the parent knew of their child's non-attendance and failed to act. Under the higher offence a warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court. Prosecution under section 444(1A) can lead to a custodial sentence.

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Reduce absence including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty to by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early; and
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

Appendix 5

Legal Enforcement by Sefton Council

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality Sefton Council will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Education Supervision Orders The local authority must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting parents. 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 at home for a specified period of time.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance.

Parents or carers who take their children out of school without school's permission or are late returning from a leave of absence that has been granted during term time as there are exceptional circumstances, **may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid within 21 days . If payment is made after 21 days but within 28 days, the penalty is increased to £120. Where a fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the matter will be referred to the Attendance and Welfare Service, who will consider instigating criminal proceedings.**

*Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued after 12 unauthorised absences in a term or 20 in two consecutive terms. Children who are late without good reason after registration closes also receive an unauthorised absence mark.

In addition, a penalty notice and may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

The **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** sets out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. Sefton Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices will be made available for schools, parents/carers and other interested parties.

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow Headteacher's to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteacher can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that **Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Headteacher's should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Sefton Council will also be conducting Pre Court Panel meetings in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.