



LAWNS PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

February 2024

Headteacher – Simon Chapman

Approved by the Governing Body on 12/2/2024

Signed: ***D Kellett***

Donna Kellett Chair of Governors

Date: 12/2/2024

Review Date: January 2025

Lawns Park Primary school is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and at Lawns Park, promoting the welfare of our children encompasses attendance, managing behaviour, access to the curriculum, health and safety and anti-bullying. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. When a child's absence is unexplained the school will contact the parents on the first day of absence. If the absence remains unexplained the school will try to establish the child's safety and whereabouts. The school will make reasonable enquiries such as ringing all emergency contacts and checking with neighbours and friends in school. School will make a CME referral as soon as possible when they have had no contact from a family, but no later than when the child has been missing from school for 20 days in the following circumstances:

- A child has left the country regardless of if a new address and/or new school information has been provided
- A child is rumoured to have moved out of the area
- A child has moved to a different Local Authority and is not on the roll of a new school within 20 days of leaving your school.

The implications of absence from school

The following shows the link between % attendance at school and number of days absent.

98%	=	less than 4 days absent in one school year.
95%	=	less than 10 days absent in one school year.
90%	=	4 weeks absent in one school year.
85%	=	5½ weeks absent in one school year.
80%	=	7½ weeks absent in one school year.

Over 5 years children with an average attendance of 85-90% will have missed half a school year of education while children with an average attendance of 80% over the same period will have missed a whole school year.

Lawns Park Primary School sincerely believes that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore regular school attendance is imperative. To this end, the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible.

The school views attendance as a safeguarding issue. Attendance and safeguarding are inextricably linked. A child's absence from school can be an early indicator of an increased need. Ultimately, if we are not seeing children regularly in school then we are unable to provide additional support where necessary.

Aims

The school aims to promote, among parents and children, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.

Expectations

The school's attendance target for 2023/24 is 96%. However, the governors acknowledge that there is still the potential for inconsistencies in attendance across year groups and across the year as, nationally, attendance has decreased in the years following covid and was at 94% in 2022/23 for primary schools.

We expect the following from our pupils:

- That they attend school regularly and feel proud to be regular attenders.
- That they will arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the day
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school or for arriving late.

We expect the following from parents:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- To ensure that they contact the school before their start time whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To complete "Leave of Absence Request" form to inform the school of intended absence.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason. Make every effort to locate the family/child in line with safeguarding procedures
- We will work in partnership with parents/carers to try and remove barriers to poor attendance and punctuality.

PROCEDURES

- Nursery – Doors will open at 8.45 for the morning session and 12.15 for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after this will receive a late mark and must access school via the classroom door or the office if arrive after 9am.
- School – Classroom doors open at 8.45am. Registration is taken at 8.50-9am. Pupils arriving after this will receive a late mark and must access school via the office to be registered.
- Any one arriving 30 minutes after 9am will be marked as an unauthorised absence.
- Parents should telephone school before 8.30am on each morning of a child's absence from school.
- When a child is absent the school will follow the procedures set out below:
- Day 1 - First day contact, telephone/text the pupil's parent or carer & all known contacts to establish reasons for the absence.
- Day 2 - Follow up on first day contact, a subsequent telephone call and/or text must be made. School should explore all known contact details listed for the pupil including any email addresses.
- Day 3 – Repeat steps for day 1 and 2. If no contact has been established school should complete a safeguarding home visit.
- Day 4 – Repeat steps for day 1 and 2. Additional investigations to establish the pupil's whereabouts should include making contact with.

Professional agencies currently involved with the family/pupil

The school where a known sibling attends

The pupil's school friends

Neighbours or known associates of the family

Social Media (where possible)

- Day 5 – Repeat steps for day 1 and 2. Write to the parent/carers requesting contact to be made with the school immediately.
- If the pupil attends on Day 2 after no contact from parent on Day 1 the school will contact the parents to seek a reason for the child not being in school on Day 1.
- Parents are made aware of the schools approach to term time absence by all staff.

- Leave of Absence must be requested by parents/carers by completing the “Leave of Absence” form.
- The afternoon register is taken at 1.15pm. Pupils are expected to be settled in class for afternoon registration at this time.
- Pupils who are leaving school before the end of the day must be collected from the office and an explanation given, along with evidence of any appointments eg dentist appointment card.
- The Inclusion and Wellbeing Worker monitors attendance and lateness. Where there is a pattern beginning to emerge, the parents are reminded by class teacher and Inclusion Wellbeing Worker about the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Parents are notified of their child’s attendance weekly on the Parent SIMs app.
- If attendance falls to or below 90% a meeting is held with the parents to discuss the reasons behind absence and how school could assist in removing barriers. Even if ongoing poor attendance has a clear and legitimate reason, such as illness, we may ask parents to provide more evidence (for instance doctors’ notes) to ensure that we have supporting evidence to explain the low attendance.

If low attendance/punctuality persists the school will work closely with The Inner West Cluster Family Engagement and Attendance Officer. Further interventions may be implemented including a family referral to the cluster services.

Punctuality

- Nursery – Doors will open at 8.45 and 12.15 for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after this will receive a late mark and must access school via the office if they arrive after 8.50am.
- Foundation 2 to Year 6 - Classroom doors open at 8.45am. Registration is taken before 9.00am. Pupils arriving after this will receive a late mark and must access school via the office to be registered.
- Parents are made aware of the schools approach to punctuality by all staff.
- If no explanation for lateness is received the school will contact the parents to seek a reason for the child not being in school on time.
- If the frequency of lateness persists so that it becomes a pattern eg occurs once a week or more a meeting is held with the parents to discuss the reasons behind poor punctuality and how school could assist in removing barriers.

School Organisation

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Head Teacher

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To set challenging but achievable targets with the Governors to reduce levels of absence.
- To communicate regularly with parents about covid related absence

Class Teacher

- To complete registers accurately and on time directly onto the SIMMs system.
- To record all reasons for absence on the SIMMs register.
- To inform Inclusion and Wellbeing Worker of any concerns in a timely manner.

School Administrator

- To amend any attendance issues on school SIMM's system eg record any absence or lateness plus reasons given in a timely manner.
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To take messages from Parents/Carers regarding absence and input data accurately.
- To report attendance issues to the Inclusion and Wellbeing Worker.

Inclusion and Wellbeing Worker

- To follow up immediately any unexplained absences by contacting parents/carers.
- Telephone call to parents/carers as soon as registers are input.
- If no answer a message will be left and a Schoop message will be sent.
- If a child is absent, follow 5 Day plan above.
- Invite parents/carers to a meeting if necessary.
- Monitor whole school attendance and report patterns and progress to SLT.
- Promote good attendance through regular communication with parents.

Parents

- Contact with school on each day of absence
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- Support child with home learning
- Regularly check attendance on SIMs app.
- Avoid booking holidays in term time.

Absence Review Procedure

- Attendance is reviewed on a half termly basis where pupils identified as persistent absentees, in line with the set government criteria and the school's attendance target, are subject to further monitoring and or action due to the link between attendance and attainment. We, as a school have a duty to inform parents of their child's attendance and how this can impact upon their performance.
- The school will contact parents of pupils whose attendance falls into the persistent absence threshold and invite them to a meeting.
- Long term standing medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate. This will be carried out by the SENCO.
- Where lateness becomes an issue the matter will be discussed with the parents and this will be monitored and a record kept by the Inclusion and Wellbeing Worker and on the SIMs data base. Both parents and children will be challenged to provide reasons for lateness.
- In the event of a child having long term absence or persistent absence or lateness the cluster Family Engagement and Attendance Officer will be contacted for advice and the Fast Track Programme may be activated. This could lead to a fine or court prosecution.

Term time leave of absence

At Lawns Park Primary, in accordance with Government regulations, we do not authorise any holidays taken in term time. As such any time taken will be treated as absence from school. It is the parents' responsibility to advise school of any absence.

Examples of authorised absence

- Sickness (if absences are excessive, a doctor's note will be required) plus sickness or absence related to covid
- Emergency medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances (eg bereavement)
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Examples of unauthorised absence

- Frequent absences attributed to minor ailments but not supported by medical evidence
- Shopping
- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Day trips

- Looking after siblings or sick parents

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. The cause of each absence is required. Reasons such as unwell or ill cannot be authorised; parents/carers will need to inform the school of the symptoms. Specific reasons are recorded on SIMs.

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 carer. For example, if a child has been sick during the night and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school, in the context of the law, can authorise an absence. A note or explanation from the parents does not guarantee authorisation.

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 or for which no explanation has been given or any planned term time absence (eg holidays).

Penalty notices

A pupil has to be absent (unauthorised) from school for at least 10 sessions (5 school days) or more within a twelve week period before the issue of a penalty notice.

Where a penalty notice is issued, each parent is required to pay a fine to the local authority. The fine equates to £60.00 per parent per child per period of absence if paid within 21 days: £120.00 per parent per child per period of absence if paid within 22-28 days. Failure to pay could lead to prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and inquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil the Common Transfer file will be completed and uploaded to the DfE National Missing Pupils Database.

Rewards: Ways for parents/carers to encourage attendance

- Ensure that your child has the correct uniform and equipment.
- Ensure that school uniform, including PE kit, swimming kit and book bag are ready the night before. Encourage your child to help you to do this.
- Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to attend if they feel supported and parents speak positively about the school and their class teacher. If you have any concerns speak to the school as soon as possible about them rather than share them with your child.
- Phone the school as soon as possible to tell them of any absence and when you expect your child to return.
- Only allow days at home for genuine illness.
- Avoid any absence from school for reasons other than your child's illness.

- Have a good routine at home to ensure homework is completed and know the school day routines.
- Praise and reward good attendance: even small successes eg going in to school promptly.

Other ways to help secure good attendance

- If there is a problem with your child's attendance, talk calmly to your child and listen to the explanation. There is always an explanation. It may seem trivial to you but it is serious enough to make your child anxious.
- Talk to the school to resolve issues. They may be able to help and support you and your child. You are not alone.
- Be particularly watchful and supportive in the run up to tests and aware of homework deadlines.
- Remember to praise your child.
- Make sure your dental/medical appointments are in school holidays or after school.

The school acknowledges that most children will have some unavoidable absences because of illness. It is important that your child is not sent to school when they are unwell. It is especially important in the event of a sickness and diarrhea that your child has at least 48 hours clear at home after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.