



LINCOLN GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:	CRAIG JACKSON
APPROVED: GOVERNING BODY	DATE:
SIGNED:	ROLE:
TO BE REVIEWED:	OCTOBER 2022

Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting pupils and families with any barriers to attending school

Lincoln Gardens Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives Lincoln Gardens Primary School has established an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

School procedures

Attendance register

By law, Lincoln Gardens Primary School keep an attendance register, and all pupils are placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session (morning) of each school day and once during the second session (afternoon). 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:15am The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm for foundation stage and key stage 1. At 1:15pm, the register for key stage 2 will take place.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am as soon as practically possible. To notify the school this must be done by making contact with the school via phone or by using the absence reporting form on parent mail.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. This needs to be done by the parent/carer making contact with the school office before the appointment is due to take place.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Reporting to parents

If your child's absence falls below 92% then the following steps will be taken:

- 1 – A letter will be sent out to the parents/carers informing them of their child's low attendance and that it will be closely monitored in the aim of seeing an improvement and increase in attendance
- 2- If the child's attendance continues to be a cause of concern and showing no signs of improvement, another letter will be sent to the parents/carers inviting them to attend an attendance meeting.
- 3 – A meeting will be held in school with the necessary school staff and parents/carers. The aim of the meeting is to support the parents/carers in improving their child's school attendance by formulating a strategy plan which will be reviewed on an agreed date.
- 4 – At the review meeting the child's attendance will be revisited. If after the set period of time there has been no improvement, the initial strategy plan will be reviewed and new strategies put in place.
- 5 – At the discretion of the school, the EWO will be contacted and a penalty notice may be issued for persistent absence.

When attendance becomes a concern, the pupil is spoken to and an age appropriate action plan (with the child) is completed. Barriers to engagement are discussed and documented within the action plan. This is then shared with the pupil and a copy is sent to the parents.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' 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

Schools have a discretionary power to grant a pupil time off school during the term for a holiday, they can also do this if they believe there are extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify the leave. All applications for leave must be done in advance by the parent(s), carer(s) that the child normally resides with. No child may be granted more than 10 days in any school year, except in 'exceptional circumstances'.

'Exceptional circumstances' means that the parent must make the case as to why their child should be treated differently to the norm. All requests should be treated on a case by case basis within the school's published attendance policy which should give it the flexibility to respond to difficult circumstances whilst discouraging

unnecessary absence. The LA recommends that policies neither ban all term-time holidays, nor bestow a right to all families to take time off for family holidays.

Parents must note that there is no obligation on the part of the school or teachers to provide school work to be completed by children whilst away on holiday.

The circumstances of each case should be taken into account, 'blanket approval' policies are not acceptable.

When considering a request for leave of absence we will take into account:

- The amount of time requested
- The pupil's general absence/attendance records
- Previous requests made for holiday absence and whether these are occurring annually/frequently.
- Proximity of public exams, e.g. SATs
- Pupil's educational needs and their ability to catch up
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- When the request was made

All requests will be responded to with a written response confirming the length of time requested and how the request will be coded, e.g. whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

Where attendance has, or is likely to fall below 92% if the holiday is taken, all requests for holiday absence will not be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances for example, where the previous absence has been due to prolonged medical/hospital needs. The Headteacher will use their discretion in this matter.

If, following a period of 10 days authorised absence, the child fails to return to school without exceptional reason, the school will seek advice from the Education Welfare Service leading to the possibly of removing the child from the school register.

Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school we promote attendance in a number of ways:

- 'Attendance Ted' awarded to the highest attending class of the week per key stage. This is to be announced during the whole school achievement assembly.
- Each child will receive a 100% attendance sticker at the end of the week if they have attended school all week.

- Each class will display their weekly attendance in their classroom.
- Each class will display their weekly attendance so the children can see their attendance and compare it to other weeks
- Every term, parents/carers will receive a congratulatory letter if their child's attendance meets the following criteria:
 - Bronze 97.5%
 - Silver 98.5%
 - Gold 100%
- A whole school display will show the classes attendance and the winning class each week will receive a reward.

Children with an ongoing proven medical condition will not be penalised for the awards as we recognize it is beyond the

Attendance monitoring

Pupil absence is monitored on a weekly basis and including analysis of irregular patterns of absence..

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will go through the steps as highlighted above in the section 'reporting to parents'

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance is monitored to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The attendance lead

The attendance lead:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Works alongside the headteacher to discuss when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Class teacher

The Class teacher:

- Records attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by the designated time.
- Records attendance on a separate sheet (laminated class register) in line with the Health and Safety Policy (Fire/Evacuation).
- Notes dates of future holiday absence and return forms, once signed, to the office.
- Hands out and chase absence notes in support of the Attendance Officer, who also has a duty to chase unauthorised absences.

Parent/Carers

- It is the statutory duty of every parent/guardian to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996)
- Parents must contact the school before 9:15am on the first day of absence notifying the school the reason why the child will not be attending.
- Where a message confirming absence has not been received, parents will be required to send into school a written note explaining the reason for each absence. (A blanket reason for a series of absences must not be accepted.)
- Regarding holiday absence – A holiday absence form must be completed prior to the absence taking place. The parent must make the case for the period of absence, e.g. booking holidays because it is cheaper in term time is not an acceptable reason for holiday absence. Parents should note that there is not a parental-right to a ten-day period of absence. This purely reflects the remit of the school to authorise absence for that period where the Headteacher decides that this is the case.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to other school policies:

- Child Protection, e-safety, Whistle Blowing, Induction, Anti Bullying, Behaviour, Physical Intervention, Health & Safety and SEN.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day