

# **LAKESIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

# LAKESIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

This policy was developed through a process of consultation with the relevant professionals from schools within the Hall Cross Family of Schools and the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service.

- It was approved by the Governing Body on 26.06.13
- Approved by the Teaching Staff – June 2013
- It will be reviewed annually. Last Review November 2017

Attendance Co-ordinator: Head teacher, Mrs J Witton  
Attendance Officer – Roz Stringer  
Education Welfare Officer: Julie Dunn

| <b>Name</b>     | <b>Role</b>                               | <b>Responsibility</b>   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Janet Witton    | Head teacher                              | The welfare of children or young people in school<br>To monitor attendance throughout the school.<br>To monitor and manage issue of Fixed Penalty Notices for term time holidays  |
| Aurelia Stokes  | Admin Officer                             | To monitor the attendance of individual children<br>To maintain detailed and accurate records of absence and lateness in accordance with DMBC<br>Good Practice Guidelines for Attendance and Safeguarding   |
| Roz Stringer    | Attendance Officer/Parent Support Advisor | The welfare of children or young people in school<br>To support raising the level of attendance of children identified as being at risk.<br>To develop and implement attendance monitoring and improvement systems.<br>To maintain detailed and accurate records of absence and lateness<br>To manage administration and communication linked to attendance.<br>To monitor the attendance of individual children<br>To follow up all children absent without explanation and take appropriate follow up action.<br>To monitor lateness and take follow up action.<br>To promote and reward attendance |
| Lesley Embleton | Thrive Practitioner/<br>Learning Mentor   | The welfare of children or young people in school   |

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Governors                            | To monitor attendance levels and procedures.   |
| Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service | To support the school in achieving its objectives by following the Local Authority Guidelines. |

### **Attendance Policy Statement**

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies as appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

#### **Statutory Duties**

Lakeside Primary School takes account of:-

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Students Attendance Records) Regulations 1991
- The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997)
- Guidance for Local Authority and schools on Improving Behaviour and Attendance in Schools (2013)
- Education and Inspectors Act 2006
- "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DfE 2016)
- "Every Child Matters" Children Act November 2004
- Improving Attendance in Schools (DfE April 2012)
- Advice on Schools Attendance (DfE Feb 2013)
- Statutory Guidance on Parental Measures for School Attendance and Behaviour (DfE 2013)

#### **Aims**

- To improve the quality of school life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is the norm. This includes encouraging parents take proactive ownership of attendance with the understanding that it helps to develop and sustain friendships, in addition to accelerating learning.
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff that the school values good attendance and punctuality and to recognise that these are achievements in themselves
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions

- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive
- To improve overall attendance and punctuality and reduce persistent absence
- To promote and support good attendance throughout formal education

### **Objectives:-**

- To involve the children or young people more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parents/carers about regular school attendance
- To ensure all school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and Inclusion Team members in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and systems within the school to enable the aims and objectives to be met
- To maintain effective working relationship with partnership schools and the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service, and the reporting of half-termly figures to the Service
- To ensure that records of attendance (Class Registers/SIMS/Latebook) are complete and accurate.
- To develop whole school awareness of the importance of attendance recording and monitoring as a safeguarding tool.

### **Actions**

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information, in a systematic and timely manner.
- To discuss the settings of targets for the school with the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these in the School Development Plan
- To target resources and activity and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parents/carers, pupils and governors informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children or young people.

### **Procedures and Attendance Strategies at Lakeside Primary School**

- All staff will complete registers accurately for each session and will inform the Attendance Officer/Parent Support Advisor, office staff, Learning Mentor, or the Headteacher of any absences that are cause for concern or suspicion, as appropriate. Electronic registration has been introduced to all classes.
- Learners arriving late will report to the Reception where they will be greeted by the Attendance Officer who will record the reasons for, times and occasions that a learner is late and reinforce the importance of punctuality.
- Parents will be asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is absent or ill.

- The school office or Attendance Officer will make telephone, text message or e-mail contact with home during the first morning when a child is absent if the parents have not notified the school. They will follow up unexplained absences of 2 days with letters and/or a home visit where families cannot be contacted by other means.
- Where a learner is developing a pattern of 'occasional' absences the parent will be contacted personally to discuss the pattern of absences by the Attendance Officer or by letter. Families may be offered meetings to discuss strategies to support attendance.
- The Head and Attendance Officer/Parent Support Advisor (PSA) will meet at least monthly to analyse attendance and monitor absences. They will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer and raise awareness of pupils with attendance below 90%.
- Procedures to monitor and follow up absences are described in the flowchart at Appendix 1.
- The Head and Attendance Officer collate attendance data to monitor attendance patterns of different pupil groups, including Looked After Children (LAC) and persistent absentees (PA children) with attendance falling below 90%.
- The school will liaise with Education Welfare Officers to follow up absences that are suspicious or causing concern.
- The Attendance Officer/PSA will provide positive support to individual families to help address issues which are impacting on punctuality and attendance. Attendance Support Plans will be produced to support families where attendance remains a cause for concern after notification by an initial letter.
- The Learning Mentor will provide positive support to individual pupils to help address issues which are impacting on punctuality and attendance
- Where necessary the school will work closely with the LA to take action against those unlawfully keeping learners from school
- Individual children and classes will be rewarded for good attendance with a range of incentives
- Charts for class attendance will be displayed in shared areas, celebrating good attendance
- Children will be offered a varied, relevant and stimulating curriculum within a safe and caring environment which ensures that they enjoy school and are keen to attend.
- PA pupils will be supported with a personal action plan, which will be monitored least monthly. Home visits may be made to PA pupils to discuss progress with Attendance Support Plans.
- Absences of children subject to Child in Need or Child Protection plans and Looked After Children will be reported to Children's Services daily.
- Attendance of children who are dual registered and educated off site will be checked daily.
- The Headteacher will respond to requests for term time holidays in line with government policy and will follow LA procedures for issue of Fixed Penalty Notices.

The school will do all that it can to ensure that learners come happily, willingly and punctually to school to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education.

## **Consultation Process**

### **1. The Governing Body**

The final policy, after consultation, will be presented for approval to the whole Governing Body.

### **2. The Parents/carers**

#### **Parents/carers will be advised of our policy on attendance:-**

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through termly newsletters
- At parents/carers evenings
- Via the website

### **3. The Children or Young People**

#### **Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance:-**

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

#### **Time schedule for implementation**

- This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with changes in DfE or LA guidance and procedures.

#### **Procedure**

- Children or young people are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
  - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
  - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parents/carers or carers will provide an explanation if the child or young person is absent on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, personally at the office or by appointment. This is recorded by Office staff and the Attendance Officer in the Explained Absence Book and on SIMS.
- If contact, explaining the child or young person's absence, fails to be made by parents or carers, then the school Attendance Officer will contact the home by telephone, text or e-mail on the initial day. This will be recorded in the Unexplained Absence Book.
- Where absence continues for 2 days or explanations are unsatisfactory, home visits or referrals will be made.

- The head teacher will regularly remind parents/carers of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Rewards celebrate the achievement of children with 98% - 100% attendance and classes with the highest attendance.

### Identification and Referral

- Identification is made by the Attendance Officer/PSA, class teacher, School Administrative Officer, or Learning Mentor. (Cause for concern)
- Concerns are passed to the person responsible for contacting parents/carers – Attendance Officer.
- Person responsible (Attendance Officer) will contact parents/carers with Letter 1.
- Following the letter, there will be four weeks' monitoring of the child or young person's attendance.
- If there is no improvement, parents will be invited to agree an Attendance Support Plan
- If there is no improvement, at this point, or sooner, depending on status, Attendance Letter 2 may be sent and parents/carers can be invited in for a meeting. This will notify parents/carers that no further absences can be authorised.
- After four weeks monitoring, if there is no improvement in attendance, parents/carers will be informed of referral to the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service
- Parental duty to ensure full school attendance will be reinforced
- If attendance has improved over the last four weeks, we will continue to monitor attendance
- The referral to the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parents/carers and a print out of the child or young person's attendance certificate.

### Completing the Register

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils should be perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive children or young people formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:-
  - Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils
  - They are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- Registers are required to be marked in ink or electronically. Any alterations should be visible and explained. Tippex or similar products may not be used
- The register must be marked using the symbols referred to in The Education (pupil registration) (England) Regulation 2006 and the associated DfE guidance.
- For schools with computerised registers the Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998

- Registers should be returned to the office before 8.45am.
- Electronic registers have to be printed out once a month and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents.**

## **Lateness**

School begins at 8.30am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Children not in school at 8.30am are recorded in registers and on SIMs a 'L', with no exceptions. The minutes late are also recorded and monitored. They are required to report to a member of the Inclusion Team in Reception to provide a reason for being late. Registers close at 9.30am after which time arrival will be recorded as a 'U'. Doors open at 8.25am and will be closed by classteachers at 8.30am. Any pupils arriving after this time will be sent to Reception to be recorded as Late.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken, including contact by letter initially, advising parents that punctuality is being monitored. If no improvement is evidenced after 4 weeks monitoring, parents are to be invited in to school to compile an action plan for improvement.

## **Pupils returned to school by Truancy Patrols and South Yorkshire Police**

The school will have in place a procedure for pupils who are returned to school by a Truancy Patrol and by Officers from South Yorkshire Police during the course of their work.

## **Family Holidays during Term Time**

Parents/carers are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time.

**Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for a holiday. The school may grant leave of absence of up to 10 days in any school year only in very exceptional circumstances which meet LA criteria.**

The school will comply with Government legislation and DMBC policy which means that no requests for holidays can be authorised except in these exceptional circumstances.

This school has adopted Local Authority guidance to all schools on the definition of an exceptional circumstance. Where the head teacher feels that there may be an exceptional circumstance which does not fit the specified criteria, she may refer to the Local Authority for advice.

When a parent/carer wishes to apply to take their child out of school during term time they must complete a leave of absence form and this should be submitted to the school at least 4 weeks before the proposed start of the holiday and before booking the holiday.

All cases where it may be necessary for longer planned absence should be discussed with the Head teacher, as a child or young person who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date, can legally be removed from the school roll and may be liable to prosecution.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave for a family holiday, the school will consider each case individually, taking into account a child or young person's overall attendance, the reasons for the absence and whether they meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. The school will not authorise holidays taken during any examination weeks.

Parents are advised annually that Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued in instances of unauthorised holiday. The LA letter informing parents of LA policy and criteria for exceptional circumstances are appended to this policy.

### **What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away during the first morning of absence
- Send a note when your child returns to school
- Try to make appointments outside school time
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Ensure the school has up to date contact details
- Ensure children arriving after 8.30am report to the Office.

### **If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?**

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the Head Teacher and staff at the school
- Talk to the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service

You may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation.

**The school aims to have ALL children or young people attending regularly and punctually and parents/carers need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service.**

**Parents/carers need to be aware that Doncaster schools are operating a prosecution system in co-operation with the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service.**

**Parents/carers need to be aware that Doncaster Council in conjunction with schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance.**

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parents/carers and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

## **Lakeside Primary School Procedure for Monitoring Attendance**

Class teachers complete registers and send to Administrative Officer.

Attendance Officer/Admin Officer check registers, record Explained and Unexplained Absences and record late comers who have signed in at the Office

Attendance Officer contacts homes of children who are absent and unaccounted for by telephone, text or e-mail. Calls are made before lunchtime. Calls and responses are logged in Explained and Unexplained Absence diaries.

Absence diaries are monitored by Attendance Officer daily. She will take further action, including additional telephone calls, meetings with parents, home visits or referral to Head or EWO if appropriate. An initial letter (Letter 1) will be followed up with an Attendance Action Plan. This is followed by Letter 2, prohibiting further authorized absences and ultimately referral and enforcement procedures if there is still no improvement.

Time is allocated weekly for the Attendance Officer to action attendance issues. This includes

- writing to parents,
- meetings and home visits,
- telephone calls
- attendance sweeps
- data collection
- maintenance of Attendance File

Attendance Officer and Headteacher hold monthly meetings and report to the Education Welfare Officer to identify referrals/caseload and further actions.

## Information for Parents

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

The Anti-Social Behavioural Act 2003 introduced Legislation that made provision for a Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. These notices require a fine to be paid by Parents of Pupils who have unauthorised absence from School during term-time.

A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued in three situations:-

- 1. If a Holiday or other leave of absence is taken during term-time without the authorisation of the Headteacher.**
- 2. If a Pupil has a period of unauthorised absence from School following an FPN warning letter, and the attendance does not improve within 15 days.** (If you do receive a warning letter from Doncaster Council about your Child's attendance you should get in touch with the Education Welfare Officer, as soon as possible, to discuss the reason for your Child's absence from School).
- 3. If a child is found on a Truancy Patrol twice during a four month period.**

Any absence which does not meet the criteria of being 'an exceptional circumstance' will be marked as unauthorised absence and as such you may be at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice. Please be aware that BOTH parents are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice for EACH child of the family with a period of unauthorised absence from school in line with Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

What are the Penalties?

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued the penalty is £60 per Parent per Child when the payment is made within 21 days. If payment is not made within this timescale the penalty amount will double to £120 per Parent per Child made within 28 days.

Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at School. If the case progresses to Court you may receive a Fine of up to £1000.

Why has the Government introduced this Legislation?

The 2013 change to Legislation states that it is really important that every child attends school for as many of the 380 half day sessions of the school year as possible. It is the responsibility of Parents to ensure that their Children do not take unnecessary time off school.

Every school in Doncaster is supporting the message that School attendance is a high priority. We hope that Parents will help us to ensure that all Doncaster Children achieve the very highest levels of attendance at School.

**Proforma letter for school to use when declining a holiday in term-time application, on school's letterhead.**

**\*One to be sent to each parent**

Dear Parent Name,

With regards to the leave of absence request form you have submitted covering the dates (holiday period start to holiday period end) I have to inform you that I have declined to authorise this request as it does not fall within exceptional criteria.

The 2 exceptional circumstances are:

1. **Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school Holidays. This must be evidenced by production of the policy document of the organisation.**
2. **Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.**

This means that any absence taken in relation to this request will be classed as **unauthorised** and recorded as such. You may also be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

*Please be aware in line with Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 BOTH parents are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice for EACH child of the family with a period of unauthorised absence from school.*

*If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued the penalty is **£60 per Parent per Child** when the payment is made within **21 days**. If payment is not made within this timescale the penalty amount will double to **£120 per Parent per Child** made within **28 days**.*

*Failure to pay within **28 days** will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at School. If the case progresses to Court you may receive a Fine of up to **£1000**.*

For your information, I enclose a copy of the Local Authority's 'Information for Parents about Fixed Penalty Notices and I would advise you to read this information very carefully.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher