Long Whatton C of E Primary

Attendance Policy



'Live Learn, Grow and Be Thankful'

Date of policy: Autumn 2024

Date adopted by Governors: Autumn 2025

Date of review: Autumn 2027

Attendance Policy

Rationale:
Long Whatton CE Primary School is committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial.

Both parents and children need to understand how crucial it is to take full advantage of the education on offer, when so many children in the world have no access to any education at all.

Overwhelmingly, evidence shows that children who attend regularly are more likely to achieve at school and to maintain close friendships with other children. We expect staff, governors and parents to support good attendance.

Aims:
It is our policy to celebrate achievement. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our pupils.
As a school we will:

- Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.
- Emphasise to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Not authorise leave in term time, except for exceptional circumstances [see holiday absence]
- Investigate, identify and strive to resolve attendance problems as as efficiently as possible.
- Promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies in order to support parents and pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents and Carers: - Once your child is registered at school, it is your responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time. You are also responsible for informing school before 9.15am on the first day of absence and on subsequent days. Telephone calls, letters, emails to the school office and personal contacts are all acceptable ways of doing this. The school always follows up any unexplained absence and this is recorded in SIMS. We will telephone or email to ask why your child is not in school using the two telephone numbers you have provided. If we are unable to contact you, we will follow this up with a visit to home to make sure all is ok.

As a school we will:

- Call the register twice a day – once at the start of the morning session (8.40am for Owls and 8.45am for Hedgehogs, Squirrels and Robins) and once at the start of the afternoon session (1.10pm).
- Intervene early where there are concerns about attendance and maintain a record of all contact.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.

The Local Authority will carry out its statutory duty of pursuing legal action against parents who fail to ensure the regular school attendance of their child.

Procedures

- Parents should contact the school office before 9.15am on the first day of absence.
- The Office Manager always follows up any unexplained absence immediately.
- Any unexplained absences will be coded as unauthorised and a DSL or attendance officer will visit the home to check the child is safe and well
- Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration.
- Registers will close at 8.50am.
- Children arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late.
- Children arriving after 8.55am will be recorded and coded as an unauthorised absence.
- Children whose attendance falls below 95% may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer to address the matter further.
- School finishes at 3.15pm for Hedgehogs, Squirrels and Robins and 3:20pm for the Owls. Parents are expected to collect their children on time and to notify the school as soon as possible if they are unable to do so by telephone.
- If parents have not collected their child by 3.45pm the school office may contact social services.

Lateness and children leaving school during the day

- Parents must give a reason for late arrival to the Office Manager.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed (8.55am onwards) will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless the child has attended an appointment.
- If a child has an appointment which requires them to leave and return to school during the day, parents should notify the office and provide the school with the appointment card/letter.

Authorised and unauthorised absences
The following are guidelines as to what are considered authorised or unauthorised absence:

- **Illness, medical dental and optician appointments** are considered 'authorised' providing that the school is satisfied that the absence is genuine. You may be required to give evidence. Parents must let the office know when taking their child out of school for any reason.

- **Family bereavements:** A request in writing or completion of a leave of absence form is required. Where a child is absent for more than the agreed period, this will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer.

- **Days of religious observance:** Absence is permitted as a result of participation in a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

- **Traveller children:** Travellers are protected from prosecution if they show that the nature of their trade requires travel from place to place, and that the child has attended school as regularly as possible. Also, where the child has attained the age of six years and has made at least 200 attendances during the previous twelve months.

- **Exceptional circumstances**: in exceptional situations, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence.

Leave without permission, arriving after the register has closed, shopping and days off for birthdays will be coded as unauthorised.

All absences will be coded as unauthorised if the school is not satisfied with the reason given or if

evidence is not provided.

Leave of absence during term time: holiday [exceptional], religious, compassionate.
Since September 2013, schools are no longer allowed to authorise absence for family holidays during term time. However, the school recognises that there are **exceptional circumstances** when it may be appropriate to grant holiday leave. These include:

- **forces personnel** on leave from a foreign posting;
- **cultural and religious** requirements;

Where a family requires a leave of absence for a holiday during term time, a written request should be submitted to the Headteacher, prior to booking a holiday. If leave is granted, it will be for a maximum of five days in one academic year. Any additional leave will be considered unauthorised.

Should your child's leave of absence be recorded as unauthorised and your child has accrued 10 sessions/5 days of unauthorised absence over the term, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer who in turn may refer the matter to the Local Authority. This could result in you being issued with a Penalty Notice. If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority.
First Offence – The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £80 per parent within your household for each child you have taken out of school. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 21 days, it will increase to £160.

Second Offence (within 3 years) – The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £160 per parent within your household for each child you have taken out of school. **(there will be no option to pay at £80 level).**

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) – The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child. Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, please contact your child's school to discuss this

Before a fine is issued, you may receive a notice to improve to give you a chance to engage with support.

Authorising requests for leave of absence

The new regulations do not permit the Headteacher to authorise absence during term time unless it meets the criteria above.

Evaluation
Constant late arrival to school or absence results in a loss of learning and disruption to the class and teacher. We will actively promote positive attitudes and support pupils to attend school on time as much as is reasonably possible.

Appendix A

Long Whatton C of E Primary School



Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances
Information for Parents

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Please note this is not an entitlement. Headteachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education. Please note that supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted at the time of your request for absence. There is no longer a provision in law for Headteachers to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday.

If your request is authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete. Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices

From 19th August 2024, a new National Framework for Penalty Notices will be enforced for unauthorised absences.

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Headteacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent. If your child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, you may be liable for a penalty notice (one days absence equals two sessions and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc.) Each school day is divided into 2 registration periods. For example, if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of the parent(s). This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration or unauthorised absence that has not been authorised as an absence from school for exceptional circumstances. Parents must complete a request for exceptional leave form and submit this to the school, allowing sufficient time to enable the school to consider the request and inform the parent of the decision.

Fines will be issued for unauthorised term time absence of 5 or more consecutive days and for fewer days where this has happened before. Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First Offence – The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £80 per parent within your household for each child you have taken out of school. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 21 days, it will increase to £160.

Second Offence (within 3 years) – The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £160 per parent within your household for each child you have taken out of school. **(there will be no option to pay at £80 level).**

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) – The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.
Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, please contact your child's school to discuss this.

We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from the school first. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.

AppB

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

School Name: Long Whatton C of E Primary School					
Student/Pupil Details **(Please complete a separate form for each child attending this school)** Name:		Date of birth:		Class:	
Address:					
Contact Numbers:					
Sibling Details of Compulsory School Age (or other children living in the household)					
Name:		Date of birth:		School:	
Name:		Date of birth:		School:	
I request permission for my child to be absent from school between: -					
Date of First Day School Absence:		Date of Return to School:		Total of Absent School Days:	

Please detail below the reason for your request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Headteacher <u>will not</u> be able to consider your request without your <u>supporting documents</u>. Please read carefully the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents attached.

Parent's Declaration:

I have read the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request.

Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day, this equals 2 sessions and a five-day absence equals 10 sessions.

Signed:

Parent/Carer) Date:

Full Name:

Please note:

- **We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.**
- **Any disagreement between estranged parents should be resolved prior to submitting this request to your child's school.**

For School Use only

The school has considered your request for leave of absence and your child's absences will be recorded as follows: -					
Number of Authorised Sessions:		Number of Unauthorised Sessions:		Number of Unauthorised sessions to date:	
Signed: Position:				Date:	

Original signed and completed forms to be retained with pupil's records.

Copy should be returned to the parent/carer of the pupil to confirm authorised or unauthorised absence prior to the intended absence period.