# Attendance Policy

**Contents**

## 1. Aims

Laburnum Primary 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.

- Creating an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and are seen to be valued by the school.

- Raise parents', carers' and pupils' awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Officeer so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age

attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending school.

At Laburnum Primary school we expect all pupils to achieve a minimum of 96% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available on the school website to all families.


## 2. 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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. School procedures

**3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Show any sessions that a non-statutory EYFS child is not expected to attend.

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 from Year 1 to 6 must arrive at school by 8.45 on each school day.**

The register for the first session for Year 1-6 will be taken at 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.00. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15 and will be kept open until 1.30

**Pupils in Reception must arrive at school by 8.50 on each school day.**

The register for the first session for Reception and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 – 1.30 and will be kept open until 1.15

Pupils in YN must arrive at school at 8.45 or 12.30 each day dependent, on session.

The register for the first session for YN will be taken from 8.45 and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30 and will be kept open until 12.45.

**3.2 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 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible.

Parents can do this by calling the main school number and leaving a message to record absence.

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 routinely.

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.


**3.3 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.

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.

Parents should inform the school office of an appointment via phone or in person.

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 in section 4.

### 3.4 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. The attendance officer, or member of office team greets children who arrive after the gates close.

Parents and carers are encouraged to improve punctuality by:

- Friendly reminders about the importance of punctuality on arrival to school.

- A letter reminding the families the importance of punctuality.

- The school will offer breakfast club to families for whom punctuality is an issue.

### 3.5 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.

This will take place on the same day of the absence.

If the school has not been provided with a reason for absence the Attendance Officer will call the contacts to ascertain a reason. The Attendance Officer will try all contacts if necessary. In a situation where the level of attendance is a concern, and no contact can be made via phone call, a home visit will occur. This will take place after the first day of absence.

Depending on the reason for non-attendance the Attendance Officer will call the families again in the same period of non-attendance to ascertain the reasons for continued non-attendance.

When a child returns to school but parents have not provided the school with a reason for the previous absence, the Attendance Officer or member of Admin or SLT will ask parents/carers for a reason. If this is unsuccessful, a letter will be sent home to ask families to indicate the reasons for absence.

If no reason is provided the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

Contact with parents around attendance occurs very frequently. A member of the attendance team will contact a family about an unexplained absence on the first day of the absence.

Class teachers will call families or speak to them in person at the end of each week were an absence has been taken. Class teachers will share the weekly overview with families outlining the missed learning opportunities.

Attendance is more formally reported to parents six times per year. Individual letters are sent out to families before each school holiday.

Attendance is also discussed as part of the parent consultation discussion. This conversation (through the use of a translator if necessary) focuses on the impact of poor attendance and highlights the issues with missed learning.

In cases where attendance is considered a concern, a member of SLT or the attendance team will discuss the attendance with the families.

The attendance of every child is also provided in the annual reports in July.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Head teacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless it is considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Leave of absence requests for the following reasons are **not** considered to be exceptional circumstances:

• availability of cheap holidays,

• availability of the desired accommodation,

• poor weather experienced in school holiday periods,

• periods overlapping with beginning or end of term.

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 – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

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

There are many examples of unauthorised absence; however, term requests for holidays will always be **declined**. Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education. In all cases of family holidays, we ask parents/carers to meet with the Attendance Officer and a member of the Leadership Team prior to the visit to highlight the importance of school, explain the detrimental effects of missing school and outline the fines that a referral will incur.

Persistent authorised absence is monitored carefully and actions linked to this are outlined in the Attendance response document (Appendix 2).

### 4.2 Part time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a **temporary** part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support program or other agreement (made with the parent) must have a time limit and it must include which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. A member of the Leadership Team will devise an Attendance Care Plan for pupils whom require part-time schooling in agreement with parents/carers.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

**4.3 Medical Needs Tuition**

If a child is so unwell that they are unfit for school then the school will work with the EWO to discuss the appropriate support. Tuition can be provided by the Hospital Education Team, either as an additional support (at a nominal cost to the school) or as a statutory service depending on the severity of the illness.

Along with the family, the school will complete a referral to The Hospital Education Team via the Early Help Assessment (EHA) process.

For a pupil to meet the criteria for the Hospital Education Team they must have a treatment plan in place and a medical professional is happy to sign the relevant forms required.

**4.4 Legal sanctions**

Laburnum Primary school will refer parents/carers to Bedford Borough for the unauthorised absence of 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 guidance for issuing penalty notices. This will be done for the following reasons:

- 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.

## 5. Attendance monitoring

All attendance is monitored, all of the time. The phased response in Appendix 2 outlines how attendance is monitored and responded to across the school.

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. The school has a number of strategies in place to address issues with attendance before they fall below a critical level.

Communication between parents and carers and the school is essential. The very close monitoring allows for individualised intervention, which often involves deployment of the family support worker to support families. We also actively signpost families to additional support and make referrals to Early Help to support families to improve attendance.

All conversations are logged on CPOMs under the Attendance criteria.

If initial informal measures fail and a pupil's absence falls below 90%, we will meet with the parent to set up an Attendance Action Plan (see Appendix 3). Parents will meet with school staff and agree an attendance target for their child/ren. The target will be carefully monitored. Sometimes these meetings will involve and member of the leadership team or an Education Welfare Officer.

A copy of the Attendance Action Plan will be sent to the EWO and will be logged with the DfE on the annual return.

If the target set is not met after three weeks, the school will consider a penalty notice request or referral to the EWO. Referral criteria for the Education Welfare Service is Unauthorised absences >10% and attendance should be <90%.

The school will consider using a penalty notice when a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 12 week period.

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Persistent absenteeism is monitored very closely using data pulled from SIMs into our attendance tracking system. The system is capable of monitoring individuals, groups and whole classes/year groups where attendance is an issue.

This data is scrutinised on a weekly basis and actions to improve it is deployed.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

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.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1 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 learning, teaching and curriculum Committee is responsible for attendance.

### 6.2 The Head teacher

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

### 6.3 The Attendance Officer/ admin support worker

The Attendance Officer:

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

Write letters inviting parents for meetings

Send all concern letters to parents

Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Works with education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the Head teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 6.4 Class Teachers

In the first instance, it is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor attendance and make early interventions. Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

All class teachers should take an active role in encouraging good attendance and discuss poor attendance with families at parent consultations, or before if necessary.

### 6.5 Admin staff

Admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on SIMs.

**6.6 Trust Education Welfare Officer**

Education Welfare Officers are expected to support the school in investigating absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.

6.7 **Pupils**

At the start of the school year, all children make an attendance promise. This is introduced in an assembly and followed up in class. As part of the attendance promise the children

- Will try their best to come to school every single day
- Will try their best to be on time every day
- Will try their best to come prepared for their learning.

The attendance promises will be send home to parents to display at home.

## 7. Children Missing in Education

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit will be carried be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a Child Missing Education case to Bedford Borough.

The pupil remains on roll at Laburnum Primary until found or the EWO sanctions removal. Any CME are discussed at vulnerable children's meetings and attendance meetings which occur weekly.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Periodically your EWO will request an electronic copy of the register check.

An audit tool has been developed for schools to assess themselves in the progress and development they are making in monitoring and improving overall attendance with the school. This audit is conducted annually at Laburnam Primary School.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 10. 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 |

## 11. Appendix 2 Attendance Action Plan Proforma

### Attendance Action Plan/Parent Contract

| School | |
|---|---|
| **Pupil** | |
| **DOB** | |
| **Class** | |
| **Looked after?** | Y/N |

| Attendance Level (%) | | Authorised (%) | | Unauthorised (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

**Purpose of plan: improve pupil's school attendance & address any issues affecting attendance**

Outline the issues surrounding attendance that the family identify. This could include:

Medical needs, home issues, school relationship, bullying, behavior/attitude

**Identified Difficulty & Action Plan (***to include Attendance Target for next 3 school weeks***)**

| No. | Difficulty | Action | By Whom |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| This plan can be continued overleaf: | Attendance Target | % |
|---|---|---|

A. We agree to the Action Plan above and will co-operate fully with these aims. We will review the plan in three weeks on …………………………………………..
B. **The school will not authorise any further absences without evidence. Failure to reach these targets will result in a Penalty Notice being issued or a referral to the Education Welfare Service.**

Signed:

Parent/Carer…………………………….…………….Print

    Name:………………………………………….

School Representative Name:…………………………………..

    Position……………………………………….

Date……….…………


**Other Actions** *(to be completed if parents do not attend or at 3 week review of this plan)*

| ACTION | Y/N | DATE REQUESTED | BY WHOM |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Penalty Notice Warning Request | | | |
| Referral to EWS | | | |
| Referral to Early Help | | | |
| Referral to Social Services | | | |