

Attendance Policy

Date of policy: September 2020

Developed by: Admissions and Placement Manager

Ratified at: Safeguarding and Clinical Governance Committee

Date of next review: September 2021

**Southfields
Multi-Academy
TRUST**



**Southfields
Academy**



**Linden Lodge
School**

A Specialist Sensory & Physical College

Introduction:

Linden Lodge School recognises that effective learning is dependent on regular and punctual attendance. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually, aiming for 100% attendance, with the school fully supporting them in this role. If there are problems that affect pupils' attendance, school values highly its partnership with parents and carers and will work with them to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Regular and punctual attendance will enable pupils to fully benefit from the educational experiences and opportunities provided by the school, supporting their academic success and the development of their talents. Each pupil is a valued and unique member of the community who will be encouraged to achieve the highest attendance possible.

Attendance is recorded in school in a morning and afternoon. Pupils not attending are given an absence mark which is either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as illness.

Unauthorised absences are those absences which are not reasonable or acceptable: for example birthdays, family days out, shopping and non-medical appointments.

Parents and carers should explain absence but it can only be authorised by the school using the national regulations and guidance. **In exceptional circumstances**, the headteacher can authorise an absence using her discretion. In doing so, she will take into consideration the individual pupil's circumstances.

Staff and governors will promote the importance of attendance and punctuality with parents, carers and children; regularly review and evaluate attendance data in order to ensure that attendance is in line with, or above, national averages; and monitor the implementation of this policy and its contribution to the fulfilment of the school's vision and aims

1. Aim

The aim of Linden Lodge School's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as rigorously as is possible.

Linden Lodge School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on *safeguarding, anti-bullying, and behaviour.*

2. Legal framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) *to their age, ability and aptitude, and*
- b) *to any special education needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

A person begins to be of compulsory school age –

- a) *when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and*
- b) *otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.*

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year –

- a) *if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,*
- b) *if they attain that age on that day, or*
- c) *(unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.*

Linden Lodge School School is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff;
- Convene a headteacher and parent governor committee to consider requests for special leave;
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance;
- The School Governors' Curriculum Committee will ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site.

School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;

- The designated Attendance Officer will take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision;
- Report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is recorded daily;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Attend pupil annual review / EHCP review meeting once a year;
- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return (see section 4.2);
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours or at the beginning or end of the day so that the child can attend part of the day;
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance;

- Do not take their children out of school during term time. If parents/carers would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headteacher using the Special Leave Request Form. This form should also be used for regular, known absence;
- Sign a home-school agreement;
- Do everything they can to have the pupil ready at their designated pick up time (LA transport).

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents/carers, and the school timetable;
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.

4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

4.1 Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school in writing. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

4.2 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day/each day of absence. The reason for absence will be recorded in the register and form part of school records. We work closely with families regarding planned absence due to illness or operations. With the support of therapists and families we aim to get the pupil back in to school as soon as possible.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible. Therefore, appointments should be made first thing in the morning or last thing in the day.

4.4 Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereave.

4.5 Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The class teacher will arrange for work to be sent home.

4.6 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and special leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents/carers do not have the automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for this reason. Requests for leave from school must be made in writing to the headteacher three weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

The Parent Governor Committee (that will include the headteacher) will together consider all applications for special leave. When deciding whether to authorise absence, the committee will take the special circumstances into account.

Examples of these might be:

- Medical care, including treatment abroad
- Overseas respite

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will, if appropriate, outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school.

Parents/carers should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

4.7 Religious observance

Linden Lodge School recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

5. School action: following up absences

Class registers are passed to the school office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents/carers.

If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Head of Department or class teacher will contact the parent/carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Attendance Policy Addendum During COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction:

1. This document is an addendum to the attendance policy during the Covid 19 outbreak.
2. In recognition of the wider school opening in September 2020, the DfE has issued guidance on recording attendance during the coronavirus pandemic. This addendum reflects the guidance issued by the DfE, which schools must now implement until such time as further guidance is issued by the DfE.

Attendance expectations laid out by the DfE:

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak, in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Attendance Codes for 2020-21 Academic Year – DfE Guidance

Codes:	Meaning:
/\	Present in school / = am \ = pm
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
X	-not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) -non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend
B	Off-site educational activity
D	Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity offsite

V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
H	Holiday authorised by the school
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious leave
S	Study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent from school without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19):

1. Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test:
 - a. Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) should not attend school and get tested.
 - b. If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result.
 - c. If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms and test negative for COVID-19. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.
2. If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
 - a. If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
 - b. If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

3. Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19):
 - a. Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).
4. Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
 - a. As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine⁵. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.
5. Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only
 - a. Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

Remote Learning:

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the school will offer them access to remote education.

Link to current government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>