

# LEONARD STANLEY C.E. (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Written 11/2015



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

At Leonard Stanley CE Primary School we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer. To do that, we want every pupil to attend school every day that they can. This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved.

### **1. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Parents/carers should:

Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.

Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.

Let the school know before 9.15 am, on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.

Seek permission from school prior to any absence that is not medical.

Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

School will:

Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of children.

Be consistent in their attendance practices.

Keep and mark registers accurately.

Follow up any unexplained absences.

Notify parents/carers, at least annually, of their child's attendance level.

Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.

Notify the LA and/or the Department for Education (DfE) of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils.

The Head teacher will:

Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.

Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.

Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.

Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.

Analyse attendance data.

Oversee attendance procedures.

Governors will:

With the Head teacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures annually.

Set targets for attendance.

Report on attendance statistics in the School Profile which is available to parents.

## **2. SCHOOL TIMES**

We expect children to be at school by 8.55 am in time for the start of morning registration.

The children should not arrive before 8.45 am

Lunch time is between 12-15 and 13-15

School finishes at 3.15 pm.

KS1 staff take children to meet their parents/ carers. KS2 pupils leave the building independently to meet their parents/carers.

Children should be collected promptly unless they are attending an after school activity. School staff will endeavour to send children out of school promptly at the end of the day.

In the unlikely event that a child is not collected at the end of the school day, we will care for the children in school until the relevant people can be contacted and children are collected.

## **3. REGISTRATION**

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Registration will take place between 8.55 a.m. and 9.05 a.m. for the morning session and between 1-15pm and 1.25pm for the afternoon.

Pupils arriving late should enter the school via the School Office and confirm to the School Admin Officer that they are present in school.

Pupils arriving after registration will be marked late. The school keeps a record of reasons given for late arrival and will follow up consistent lateness.

Pupils arriving after 9.05 am will be recorded as an Unauthorised absence for that session, if no acceptable reason for lateness is given

The marking of registers will be in accordance with instructions set out at the front of the register.

Absence, legally, has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the LA and DfE. Only school can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

#### **4. AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Is when a pupil:

Is absent with the prior permission of the school;

Is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dental appointment;

Is away for a day set aside by their parent's religion for religious observance;

Has suffered a family bereavement;

Has been excluded;

Of Traveller parents if travelling in connection with their work.

Other authorised absences as agreed by the Head Teacher

#### **5. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Is when:

A pupil is absent and no explanation or an unacceptable explanation is offered;

A pupil is away from school for a period not previously agreed with the Head Teacher.

An approved educational activity is not recorded as an absence and will be marked when a pupil is on a school/educational visit, is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.

## 6. REQUESTS TO TAKE A CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL IN TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations of 2013 came into force on September 1st 2013. These amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. This is the DfE guidance followed by the Governing Body at Leonard Stanley CE Primary School.

Exceptional circumstances which the Governing Body have agreed will be carefully considered are:

Family weddings and funerals

Request linked with parent whose employment excludes them taking leave during school holidays (evidence from employer required).

Requests linked with family / cultural background in another country which cannot be taken during the school holidays.

Requests linked with a parent in the Armed Forces and their deployment away from home.

Parents must make a formal request to the school and receive prior permission if they wish to take their child out of school for any reason during term-time. This REQUEST form is available from the school office. This is a legal requirement.

This form will then be signed by the Head Teacher and the absence either authorised or unauthorised (refused). The form will be sent back to parents informing them of this. A penalty notice information leaflet may be sent with the letter if deemed appropriate.

If parents decide to ignore this refusal and take their children out of school on an UNAUTHORISED basis, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the class register.

## 7. ISSUING OF WARNING LETTERS AND PENALTY NOTICES

A Penalty Notice can only be issued when an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason or in one of the following circumstances of unauthorised absence:

**Holiday during term time** when the school has not authorised the absence and the child has missed at least 10 sessions (5 days) within a 10 week period.

**Persistent late arrival at school** after the registers have closed, and where the U code is used on the attendance certificate on at least 10 occasions within a 10 week period.

### **Formal Warning letter**

Following 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence during a 10 week period, the school can issue a formal warning letter to a parent giving fifteen days for an improvement to be made before requesting a Penalty Notice be issued by the Local Authority, There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice, so these 15 days allow parents time to make representations to the school. (see letter template).

If there is further unauthorised absence during the 15 day period the school can request a penalty notice be issued by the the LA.

If there is no further unauthorised absence during the 15 day period the case will be closed and the warning letter kept on file.

If the child subsequently has ten sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence, the school can request a Penalty Notice be issued by the LA Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team if the criteria are met, without having to send out a second warning letter.

### **8. APPOINTMENTS**

If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified. Pupils leaving school mid-session should, for safety reasons, notify the office on departure and re-arrival. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on arrival.

### **9. FREQUENT ABSENCES FOR MEDICAL REASONS**

When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons the school medical service may be consulted. Where necessary a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupil's health and educational needs can be made.

### **10. LONGER ABSENCES**

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time will be positively welcomed back and will be helped to catch up with missed work. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life.

### **11. SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

After close of registration, registers will be returned to the office and checked.

Parents are asked to telephone the school if their child will be absent for the day. Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.30 a.m. a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. All telephone messages will be dated and recorded in writing by the Admin Officer or Headteacher and put into the Class register folder. This ensures that parents and the school are sure about the child's whereabouts.

If school have been unable to make contact by telephone a written communication will be sent on the 3rd day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is no response a reminder will be sent on the 6th day of absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the Head Teacher who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team may be contacted for advice.

## **12. THE LAW**

The law says that:

Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;

That Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;

Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

The Local Authority must consider a number of factors before submitting a case for prosecution.

Schools will have a range of strategies for dealing with poor attendance, however the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team (EE&I) on behalf of the Local Authority requires schools to have carried out the following:

Investigated the reasons for absence

Met with parent(s) – preferably by home visit

Warned parents in writing at the outset of the possibility of prosecution

Implemented strategies to improve attendance, and provide evidence of this.

Considered and completed a Common Assessment Form (CAF) and where appropriate

Held a formal Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with parents and child to draw up a plan.

In addition there must be:

At least 20 continuous unauthorised sessions of absence or

At least 28 unauthorised sessions in the academic year.

### **13. STRATEGIES**

To support our attendance policy we:

Will treat attendance as a priority;

Promote good attendance at every opportunity –at Parents’ Evenings, at Induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards etc.

Always use first day telephone contact;

Set attendance targets for the school ;

Keep parents/carers informed of their child’s attendance level;

Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis;

Notify Governors annually of attendance levels;

Liaise fully with the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team when necessary;

Provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for children where they feel valued and welcomed and that their presence in school is important.

Meet with parents to discuss attendance.

Hold a formal Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with parents and child to draw up a plan if necessary.

### **14. SUCCESS CRITERIA**

We are meeting or exceeding our attendance targets.

Our attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools.

We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted,

Everybody is clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.

### **15. MONITORING**

This policy will currently be reviewed on a 12 monthly basis.

Signed.....

Date.....



## **Appendix 1**

### **Sample Letter 1**

Dear Parents/ Carers

School Attendance

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware that your child's attendance is a potential cause for concern and that we need to work together to ensure that the situation improves and that absences from school are much less frequent.

In our continued drive to improve the attendance of all pupils at the school, I have recently been monitoring the attendance of all individual pupils.

I am currently writing to all parents of pupils whose attendance has fallen below 85%, as this is a cause for concern. The Government expectation is that pupil's attendance should be at least 95% or above.

I appreciate that you will have sent in notes or made phone calls to the school to explain these absences, but this amount of absence is still a concern.

I have attached your child's attendance certificate which records their absences from school and indicates your child's overall attendance percentage so far this year.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this situation with you and would encourage you to make an appointment to see me.

I will be monitoring attendance on a monthly basis and hope that the attendance of your child will improve over the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Green

Head Teacher

## **Appendix 2**

### **Sample Letter 2**

Dear Parents/ Carers

School Attendance

Following my letter dated \_\_\_\_\_, I have continued to monitor the attendance of all individual pupils. Since alerting you to the fact that your child's attendance had fallen below 85%, this situation has not improved.

Your child's attendance at school since Sept ....., now stands at \_\_\_\_\_. This is well below the Government expectation of 95% attendance.

In this situation, I will now need to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service, in order that they can work with you and the school to improve the attendance of your child.

I have attached a copy of your child's attendance certificate recording their absences.

Please do not hesitate to come and discuss this situation with me, as it is important that we continue to work together to ensure that \_\_\_\_\_ receives the best education possible.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Green

Head Teacher

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Sample Letter 3**

**Dear \*\*\*\***

#### **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013**

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure that their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Practice the Local Authority can issue Penalty Notices to parents or carers where a child has missed 10 or more sessions over the previous 10 weeks without permission from the school.

\* has been absent from school for ten or more sessions in the previous ten weeks without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the Head Teacher (please note there are normally two sessions in each school day). This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

**I need to inform you that the level of \*'s unauthorised absence places you at risk of a Penalty Notice and / or Court Action by the Local Authority.**

Providing there are no further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days of the receipt of this letter a Penalty Notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must draw your attention to the fact that should \* have more unauthorised absences within the next 12 months, you may receive a Penalty Notice without further warning.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 4

### Sample Letter 4

General lateness and absence – Sample letter

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs \_\_\_\_\_

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the time at which \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ arrive at school on some mornings and the amount of time that they are absent from school.

As I'm sure that you are aware our school prospectus states that children should arrive at school each day between **8.45 and 9-05am**. On the following dates since September..... X and Y have arrived after 8.45am:

07/09/ 9-00 am X overslept

10/09/ 9-15 am Dad couldn't find the keys

27/09 9-20 am Running late

28/09/ 9-15 am Running late

1/10/ 9.10 am Running late

In addition to these dates, the children have also had a considerable amount of time off school since September 2\*\*\*.

**X has been absent from school for 15 days since Sept 2\*\*\*.**

(Days detailed)

**Y has been absent from school for 11 days since Sept 2\*\*\*.**

(Days detailed)

The reasons given for all the above absences are illness.

When a child is late once or twice we are fairly unconcerned. However the DfE now asks schools to follow up repeated lateness and investigate the reasons behind the issue.

X and Y often arrive when the other children are being given their instructions for the first activity of the day or later. When they arrive late they then require instructions to be re-explained which wastes valuable teacher time. Arriving late gives the children a very unsettled start to the school day. Often the register and list of children wanting lunch have been taken to the relevant staff before the children arrive. Their late request for a lunch or mark in the register to show that they are in school disrupts the work of staff involved in those aspects of school administration.

The reasons for X and Y being late are above, as recorded in our "late" book. **However, I would be grateful if you would aim to ensure that they arrive punctually for school from now on.**

I am also concerned that both children have now had over 2 school weeks off sick since September 2\*\*\* and X over 3 weeks. This is a huge amount of learning time that has been lost. Both X and Y have Special Educational Needs issues and long periods of absence will increasingly limit progress with both their learning and behavioural issues.

**The issue of lateness and long periods of absence was brought to your attention this time last year. If these long periods of absence and constant lateness for school do not improve in the next few weeks I will need to ring the Educational Welfare Officer to ask her to look into this further and work with you and the school to ensure that these situations do not continue to happen.**

If you wish to discuss any of the above issues with me further please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me. I hope that we can continue to work together to ensure that X and Y are able to learn as effectively as possible during their time at school.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Green

(Head Teacher)