The LETTA Trust

Attendance Policy

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Contents

1. Aims 3

2. Legislation and guidance 3

3. Roles and responsibilities 3

4. Recording attendance 4

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence 6

6. Strategies for promoting attendance 8

7. Attendance monitoring 8

8. Children missing education 9

9. Monitoring arrangements 9

10. Links with other policies 9

Appendix 1: Attendance codes 9

1. Aims

Attendance is key to every pupil's success at school. Quite simply, if you don't come to school regularly and on time, you are not going to be able to make the most of the rich curriculum experiences that we offer you.

Our aim is to promote high attendance so that our pupils achieve well at school. Regular attendance is also crucial for making friends and developing good relationships with school adults.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, in particular persistent absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty of ensuring their children of compulsory school age attend regularly

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:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Board (LGB)

The LGB is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school each term.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the CEO and LGB
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The family support worker

LETTA schools employ family support workers who are responsible for attendance. These members of staff are available each day to give support and advice on improving children's

attendance. They also provide a range of learning activities for parents during school time. The family support worker:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Delivers a systems of rewards to encourage good attendance
- Reports on attendance to senior leaders
- Works with other professionals to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teaching staff

Class teaching staff are available to parents at the end of each day to discuss any issues that may affect children's attendance and progress. Appointments are available for longer discussions with the class teacher or a senior member of staff, by calling the school office. Class teaching staff are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office
- Encouraging their pupils to come to school every day
- Discussing absence with pupils when they return to school
- Discussing attendance with parents at meetings

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to:

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system
- Contact parents if their child does not arrive at school
- Collate attendance data

3.6 Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and are punctual. We build relationships with parents from the outset and set clear expectations about attendance.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Each school creates an attendance register, and places all pupils onto this register. Teaching staff take the attendance register at the start of the morning and after lunch. It records whether each pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register includes:

- 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.

We keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Each school has agreed start times for the morning and afternoon sessions in addition to a time that registers open and a time that registers close.

4.2 Unplanned absence
The pupil's parent or carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by calling the school office before 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7 Attendance monitoring).

We mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents or carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence
We encourage parents or carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil is out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment is counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents show evidence of appointments to admin staff.

The pupil's parent or carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality
A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Children arriving at school late enter through the main office, where they are marked in the late book and the reason for their lateness is noted.

If a pattern is identified or there are ongoing issues, parents are contacted by the family support worker to offer support. If lateness persists then a meeting is held with parents and a written warning letter is issued to the parents regarding lateness. If no improvement is made then a referral is made to the LA for a Financial Penalty Notice (FPN).

4.5 Following up absence
Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer to ascertain the reason, by calling the parent or carer or making a home visit
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents
Teachers notify parents of their child's attendance in parent-teacher meetings in Autumn and Spring. Annual attendance and punctuality is included in the end of year report. Each week, whole school and class attendance is reported in the newsletter for parents.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence
Research has shown that absence from school for sustained periods of time has a detrimental effect on children's progress. For this reason, the school will not normally approve term-time absence. Parents wishing to take children out of school during term time will need to apply in writing to the Headteacher, who will notify them of their decision. Forms for this are available from the Family Support Worker.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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

Holidays in term-time
Families taking their children out of school for extended leave or holidays in term time risk being fined by the Local Authority. The schools' Attendance Welfare Advisor (AWA) will take action to remove from the school role any child that has not returned to school from extended leave.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence
School procedures for targeting unauthorised absence:

- An informal letter is sent to parents informing them of their child's attendance percentage
- Attendance for that child is monitored over the next six weeks
- If there has been insufficient improvement, the family support worker and a senior

leader meet with parents
- A warning letter is sent to the parents
- An Early Help Assessment (EHA) is completed
- Referral to the LA for a FPN.

5.3 Legal sanctions
The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices are issued by a local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance
There are a number of ways attendance is rewarded. These include:
- Weekly attendance presentations celebrate good attendance and promote competition with class league tables
- Whole school attendance updates are put in weekly newsletters
- Awards - e.g. if every class has 100% attendance on any given day, all children will be given a treat such as ice cream
- Half termly class reward for the class with the highest attendance
- End of term award and certificate for all the children who have achieved 100%, this might include being invited to the internal cinema. Of these children, one child from each phase will win a prize - eg an Ipad, bike, scooter
- At the end of the academic year, if a child has achieved 100% perfect attendance, they will be entered into a draw for a family break for up to the value of £500
- A positive letter of improvement is sent to parents if attendance has improved after 6 weeks of monitoring
- Targeted children will be rewarded for perfect attendance for short periods of time
- 'Attendance Week' that parents, staff and children all take part in

7. Attendance monitoring
The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.
A pupil's parent or carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school may ask for medical evidence.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent or carer, we involve an education welfare officer. - If attendance falls below 90%.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil is classified as a persistent absentee.

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. The school compares attendance data to the national average and to other LETTA schools and shares this with the CEO and the Local Governing Board.

Leaders and teachers keep track of attendance information for their pupils. This information is discussed in pupil progress meetings and in weekly 1-1s. Where there are concerns, leaders and teachers work together with the inclusion team to support the pupil and their family and ensure attendance improves.

8. Children missing education

Please refer to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for the process to follow if a child is missing education.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Inclusion Policy

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