

TONBRIDGE FEDERATION POLICY

Policy name	Attendance Policy
School in which policy applies	Long Mead Community Primary School
Date written	September 2023
Date agreed by Governing Body	19 TH September 2023
Date of renewal	September 2024
Senior member of staff with oversight	Elizabeth Alexander – Headteacher Karen Follows – Acting Headteacher
Governor with oversight	Isabel Handyside



Statement of Intent

Long Mead Community Primary School recognises the importance of full attendance and aims to ensure that all pupils achieve and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Long Mead Community Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them and enjoy a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Regular attendance and punctuality is a prerequisite to a good education and therefore is a priority for the school. Long Mead Community Primary School is committed to providing a full and inclusive educational experience for all pupils.

Irregular attendance is likely to place the child at an educational disadvantage. As a Federation, therefore, we aim to pursue the goal of 100% pupil attendance. In this matter, the partnership between school and home is important. School aims to develop children to their full potential; parents have a responsibility to aid the education process by ensuring that children attend school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a suitable condition to learn.

We expect our parents to value their child's education and to fully support the school's aims, goals and procedures.

Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child/children attend school regularly and arrive on time.

Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and all students should be allowed to take full advantage of the maximum range of educational opportunities available to them by law.

Poor attendance undermines their education, sometimes puts pupils at risk, encourages poor working habits, inhibits social and academic development, reduces opportunities and on occasions encourages anti-social behaviour.

It has been statistically proven that ALL students who are persistently absent from school (over 10% absence) fail to reach their potential by the time they reach the age of 16.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent and provide a justifiable reason for the absence.

Attendance is a safeguarding issue and all parties must know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 08.30am at Long Mead Community Primary School. All pupils who arrive late must report to the reception where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Governor for attendance- Isabelle Handyside and Philippa Blythe

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The Headteacher

The Headteacher (Acting Headteacher) is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring and analyzing attendance data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance

Designated Safeguarding Leads

The designated safeguarding leads are responsible for:

- Texting and ringing parents chasing attendance
- Sending letters and requesting fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Follow and implement all the behavior support strategies
- Carry out unannounced visits and pick up children in the minibus where necessary
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence and update records
- Contacting Kent Attendance and liaison support for families

The DSLs are Karen Follows (kfollows@tonbridgefederation.co.uk), Emma Dann (edann@tonbridgefederation.co.uk) and Nicola Wilson (nwilson@tonbridgefederation.co.uk)

Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via SIMS.

Official Attendance Codes

Attendance (present) codes		Absence codes	
I	Present	C	Authorised absence
L	Late (before the register has closed)	E	Excluded
B	Approved off-site educational activity	I	Illness
D	Dual registered (on roll at 2 schools)	M	Medical appointment
J	Interview	R	Religious observance
P	Approved sporting activity	S	Study leave
V	Educational trip or visit	T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
W	Work Experience	G	Unauthorised holiday
Administrative codes		N	Unauthorised no reason provided

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X	Not required in school or not compulsory school ages	O	Unauthorised and not satisfied with reason of absence
Y	School site is closed, disruption to travel - exceptional circumstance	U	Arrived after the register had closed
z	Pupil not on admission register – advance set up	H	Authorised holiday
		#	Planned whole or partial school closure

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning of each school day and immediately after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.30am and 8.40am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office staff on 01732 350601 or via email office@long-mead.kent.sch.uk. When reporting your child's absence from school, please remember to give specific details of the illness because "poorly/unwell" is not sufficient. We may not authorise the absence if this is regularly used.

Physical Sickness

For a student who has been physically sick:

If the sickness is contagious, i.e. it has been caused by a bug or virus, the student should return to school 48 hours after their last sickness. This is the same time period with diarrhoea.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Please contact the school office staff on 01732 350601 or via email office@long-mead.kent.sch.uk. However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

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

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Lateness will be recorded and monitored closely. Contact with parents/carers will be made and will be invited into school for a formal meeting with the DSLs or Headteacher if it persists. The school will also refer the case to the Local Authority.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, without reason, the school will:

Text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If no response to the text message is received, a phone call will be made in the afternoon of the first day. On the second day of an unexplained absence, the DSL team will carry out an unannounced visit and follow-up letter will be sent.

Reporting to parents/carers

Half termly attendance reports will be sent to parents/carers
Weekly class attendance over 95% celebrated on social media
Half termly letters promoting good attendance

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Holidays in term time will not be authorized.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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

Legal sanctions

The 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 each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a 50 day period the school will consider the following:

School Liaison Officer Actions:

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This may include:

- Letters home
- Home visits
- Multi-agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Assemblies celebrating class attendance over 95% with extra play and Attendance Ted
- Visual display around the school
- Half termly reports to parents
- Social Media
- Parent meetings with the Headteacher (Acting Headteacher)

Attendance monitoring

Proactively use attendance data to identify and classify pupils at risk of poor attendance

Pre-persistently absent monitoring:

95% or higher-Green

92-94.9% Amber

90-91.9% Red

90% or lower- persistently absent

50% or lower- severely absent

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- 95 % and higher attendance – Continue to promote good attendance through assemblies and celebrate class attendance.
- Below 95% attendance - monitored daily by the DSLs and parents/carers contacted

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data weekly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Analyze attendance weekly to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Contact Kent Attendance for support in dealing with persistent absence or lateness

Children Missing Education (CME)

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher (Acting Headteacher).

The safeguarding team will be notified immediately if a child is missing education.

Where a child is missing from education, the Local Authority will be informed and their official guidance will be followed.

Data Protection

Please refer to the Federation's GDPR policies for further information.

APPENDIX 1

LONG MEAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL: ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE & ILLNESS DAILY ROUTINES

The school gates open at 8:30 am and close at 8.40am. All pupils should arrive by this time.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD BE ON THE SCHOOL SITE BY 8:40 am.

If you drop or collect your child by car at the start or end of the school day, please do not drive down the drive to the school site unless you are a disabled blue badge holder.

Research has proven that students who do not regularly attend school do not achieve as well as they could. The law also requires all parents to ensure their child regularly attends school.

The school deems that regular attendance should be 100%.

If your child is absent, contact us **EVERY MORNING DURING THE ABSENCE BY 8-00 am** in the following ways:

BY TELEPHONE – **01732 350601**

OR

BY EMAIL – office@long-mead.kent.sch.uk

In cases where absences remain unexplained, parents will be contacted by phone, letter or may receive a visit.

When reporting your child's absence from school, please remember to give specific details of the illness because “poorly/unwell” is not sufficient. We may not authorise the absence if this is regularly used.

ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

If a student feels unwell during the day then they will be referred to a first aider. The first aider will take a view on whether the student should be sent home or is well enough to return to their lesson.

No medication of any sort can be given to a student, unless it has been brought in by a parent with accompanying written parental permission.

Parents/guardians must ensure that we have an emergency telephone number on which they, or another responsible adult, can be contacted. The school's medical room is intended for first aid treatment. Any accident or emergency will be dealt with by an appointed first aider in the customary way. Should it be necessary to call an ambulance, every effort will be made to contact parents immediately but, failing this, a first aider or another member of staff will normally accompany the ambulance to the hospital.

NO MEDICATION WILL BE GIVEN WITHOUT THE WRITTEN AUTHORITY OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN.

All medication must come in its original packaging, with clear instructions of dose and frequency of use.

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LATENESS

For all students, the school day starts **AT** 8-30 am. Lateness to School will be recorded in the register. Students arriving after 8.45 am should report to the school reception.

For repeated lateness the LA will be contacted and may issue parents with a fixed penalty notice (fine).

MEDICAL & DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Whenever possible, please try to make appointments outside of the school day. If students need to miss part of the day to attend an appointment, parents will need to inform school and provide evidence.

PERMANENT/TEMPORARY DISABILITY

Any permanent or temporary disability which may affect performance, e.g. participation in PE/Dance or any school activity should be notified to the School in writing without delay and supported by a doctor's certificate. Information of this type is kept confidential, but in the interest of the student, appropriate staff will be informed of all conditions which present hazards, however slight. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure information that is essential to their child's well-being is not withheld.

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FAMILY HOLIDAYS

Family holidays will **not** be authorised during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised holidays will be reported to the enforcement team at KCC and are likely to result in a parental fine. Absence results in missed work and interruption to a child's learning. Teachers are unable to set work to cover such absences.

MEDICAL & DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Whenever possible, please try to make appointments outside of the school day. If students need to miss part of the day to attend an appointment, they will need to bring a letter to Student Services, where they will be signed out and issued with a school pass. On return, they must report back to the visitor reception to be signed back in.

Students must not leave the school site without signing out.

PERMANENT/TEMPORARY DISABILITY

Any permanent or temporary disability which may affect performance, e.g. participation in PE/Dance or any school activity should be notified to the School in writing without delay and supported by a doctor's certificate. Information of this type is kept confidential, but in the interest of the student, appropriate staff will be informed of all conditions which present hazards, however slight. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure information that is essential to their child's well-being is not withheld.

School based absence intervention

