



Long Lane Primary School

Attendance Guidance & Procedures

Date	Description
December 2016	Agreed by Full Governing Board

Review Schedule	3 Years
Next Review	December 2019

The Governors at Long Lane Primary School actively promote the aims of the school, and recognise that children must attend school regularly if they are to make the best of the opportunities they have to learn and make best progress.

It is a parents' responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities. Statistics show a direct link between attendance and attainment. Please read the table below, it is quite staggering!

Attendance	Days lost over 7 Primary years	Weeks lost over 7 Primary years	Equivalent in terms
95%	66	13	1 term
90%	133	26	2 terms
85%	200	39	3 terms (whole year)

Parents also have a duty to ensure that their children receive an appropriate education. Parents who have chosen to send their children to Long Lane Primary School are asked to sign a Home School Agreement, indicating they will do their best to ensure their children attend school regularly.

Staff do their best to encourage children to attend school regularly, following up unexplained absences and requesting reasons from parents for these.

Children are expected to attend school each day unless they are unwell. The expected level of attendance is a minimum of **96%**. This allows for the occasional day or two of absence through illness, without a child falling behind with their work. The school monitors attendance on a six weekly basis. (See table below) Parents will be notified when attendance drops below 95%. This will include ALL types of absence including authorised ones (ie for illness and appointments etc). Parents are given feedback on the level of their child's Annual attendance on their Annual report. If attendance falls below 90% the head teacher will not authorise any absences unless accompanied by medical evidence.

Persistent Absence (PA)

From September 2015 the DfE and School Census guidance determines that pupils will be defined as PA when their absence reaches 10%. * A session is one morning or afternoon, 14 sessions equates to 7 full days.

Terms	PA at 10%	Absence at 5%
Term 1	7 or more sessions*	4 or more sessions
Term 1 & Term 2	14 or more sessions (7 days)	7 or more sessions
Term 1 & Term 2 & Term 3	20 or more sessions (10 days)	10 or more sessions
Term 1 & Term 2 & Term 3 & Term 4	25 or more sessions	13 or more sessions
Term 1 & Term 2 & Term 3 & Term 4 & Term 5	31 or more sessions	16 or more sessions
Term 1 & Term 2 & Term 3 & Term 4 & Term 5 & Term 6	38 or more sessions (19 days)	19 or more sessions

What should I do if my child is unwell?

Children should not come to school if they are obviously unwell. You must telephone the school soon as you know your child will not be attending that day. The voicemail operates out of hours. You are expected to give the reason for absence, and indicate if it is likely your child will be absent longer than one day.

Absence for genuine illness is always authorised. However, you may be required to provide medical evidence for prolonged or repeated illnesses, e.g. an appointment card or label for prescribed medication, for your child's absence to be authorised.

How long should my child stay home if they are ill?

We have regularly updated detailed information from the Health Authority regarding absence periods related to illnesses. This gives information about the length of time children should remain home once symptoms are clearing. Should your child be ill with a 'named' illness and you would like to know when they may return to school, please do ring the school and we shall be able to tell you. This will be very helpful, as often children are able to return to school sooner than you may think, provided they are well in themselves, as the infectious periods of illnesses vary greatly.

If children have vomiting and/or diarrhoea, they must stay home from school for 48 hours after the last episode. This is to ensure children are free from infection, and are well enough to attend school. We frequently have children who have been sick at school one day and sent home, returned the next day, only to be sent home again: often there are then a number of other children infected, and sometimes staff.

We need to make sure that we avoid any 'epidemics' if we possibly can, so this rule is strictly enforced.

I need to take my child to the dentist/doctor. What do I do about them coming to school?

Most routine appointments can be made outside of school hours. Sometimes you need to see a doctor more urgently, so be guided by what they say as to whether your child comes to school afterwards. However, in the majority of routine cases we would expect to see them back at school afterwards. If your child is absent due to attending a medical or dental appointment, please let us know in writing.

What does 'unauthorised absence' mean?

Unauthorised absence is when a pupil is absent from school when they should have been in school, or school have not been given a reason for the absence.

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. To do this, he needs to know that the reason the child was away is actually a legitimate reason not to come to school. Illness, for example, or attending family funeral, are legitimate reasons for a child to be absent, and are authorised absences.

Having time off for no real reason is unauthorised absence. Absences for buying new shoes, being fitted for a bridesmaid dress, staying home because a brother or sister is ill, attending birthday parties, or having to help with a baby, are examples of absences that are not legitimate.

Sometimes parents do not inform us of the reason for their child's absence. Without a reason given, the Headteacher cannot authorise absence, so this remains unauthorised.

If we do not receive a phone call or a letter, we always follow this up with a phone call asking why a child was away, in case you have just forgotten to let us know the reason. If there is no reply, a letter will be sent through the post – if there is no genuine reason provided, or no reply, then this absence remains as unauthorised.

Obviously children who wilfully truant have their absence recorded as unauthorised.

What happens if my child has several unauthorised absences?

Regular unauthorised absences are brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer, who may contact you to discuss the reasons for these absences and explore any help that could be given to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Continued unauthorised absence will lead to a Penalty Warning Notice being sent. You may be asked to attend a meeting at school with the Headteacher, Education Welfare Officer and a Governor, for you to explain the reasons for your child's continued unauthorised absences, and to discuss the impact this has had on your child's education. This is a formal meeting, which is minuted. These minutes are sent to the Principal Education Welfare Officer, who decides whether to pass them to the Legal Department. It is the Legal Department's decision whether to issue a financial penalty for unlawful absence from school.

Requests for leave or absence

What do I do if I think I have a genuine reason for having a leave of absence?

Firstly, bear in mind that the reason which may seem good to you may not fall within those determined by the Regulations. There is no automatic right to go on holiday each year and no entitlement for leave of absence for your child for a family holiday.

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** previously allowed Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which comes in to effect on 1st September 2013 removes references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If you believe you do have a genuine reason, then upon request the School Office will schedule an appointment with the Headteacher to enable you to give as much information about your circumstances as you can. A 'Request for Leave of Absence Form' will only be issued once this meeting has taken place.

Who authorises leave of absence?

Leave of absence may only be authorised by the Headteacher, with reference to West Berkshire regulations, which have been adopted in full by the Governors of Long Lane Primary School.

These regulations are that:

- The cost of holidays, or a family's financial situation, is not a consideration when authorising leave of absence. This includes leave of absence paid for by other family members such as Grandparents. Parents are expected to ensure other family members are aware of these regulations.
- Working parents must ensure they book their leave well in advance to ensure they can take a break outside of term time. Please be aware that, if the reason given for requesting term time absence is related to work circumstances, this information may be checked by West Berkshire. This is to ensure

that employers take into account the needs of parents when allocating annual leave. Parents are expected to ensure that other family members are aware of the term dates if they are likely to be booking a family holiday.

- Parents who are self employed must also ensure they organise family holidays outside of term time. The regulations apply equally to all parents.

What will happen if leave of absence is not authorised?

The Headteacher will return your form within a week, with the section at the end relating to authorisation completed and signed. If the absence is not authorised, a letter will follow, giving contact details of our Education Welfare Officer, together with West Berkshire's Penalty Warning Notice.

Please note it is the Headteacher who gives authorisation for absence, not the Education Welfare Officer

What if we take leave of absence anyway?

Should you choose to take your children out of school in term time, and this is not authorised, you may have to pay a fine to West Berkshire Council of £60 per child (or £120 if not paid within 21 days – non-payment after 28 days may lead to you being taken to court and could lead to a criminal record for non-payment of fines).

Where can I find out more about the West Berkshire Council Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices?

This is the guidance that schools must follow, before a Penalty Notice may be issued to the parents of a child who attends a West Berkshire School. A copy of this can be found on www.westberks.gov.uk

When can penalty notices be issued?

A penalty notice can be given when a pupil has missed 20 half day sessions from school within a 10 school week period and these absences are unauthorised.

Or

When a pupil has missed 10 or more half days of unauthorised leave of absence sessions in a 10 school week period. (i.e. 5 school days).

This is applicable where the parent has taken the child out of school for a planned leave of absence but this has not been authorised by the school. The unauthorised sessions of absence may or may not be on a consecutive basis.

Or

When a pupil is found present without reasonable justification in a public place during school hours during the first 5 days of their exclusion from school.

What happens to my child's attendance records when they change schools?

Attendance records, along with information about any Penalty Warning Notices etc form part of your child's formal records. These are passed on to secondary school, or to another primary school should your child change schools before the end of their primary education.

All schools are expected to follow the same regulations with regard to their policy for attendance.

Lateness

The school day begins with registration at 8:55 am. A bell rings at this time, and external doors are closed. Children who arrive after 8:55 am are late and must come into school through the Main Entrance into Reception. They must sign in and get their register mark. If parents are with them, they must provide a reason for lateness. If the child is not accompanied or dropped off, parents will be informed of their child's lateness by phone and asked to provide a reason.

Continued lateness will result in a letter from school as a reminder to parents that punctuality is an important part of school and adult life. If lateness persists this may lead to the Education Welfare Officer contacting you to discuss the reasons for this.

Children who arrive after 9:25am are considered absent, and this will be recorded in the register as unauthorised which could also lead to a fixed penalty fine.