



Lovelace Primary School Attendance Policy

Date agreed: 24 May 2022

Date of next review: 1 September 2023

Signature of Headteacher: *signed copies held at school office*

Signature on behalf of Governing Body (Chair / or chair of committee):
signed copies held at school office

Everyone in. Every Day. Doing it the **Lovelace Way**

Lovelace School firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Being in school and ready to learn is crucial to each child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents to ensure their children sustain the maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. We expect parents to ensure that their child's attendance is 96% or above for each academic year. In addition, when absence is unavoidable, parents will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

The aim of this policy is to encourage good and regular attendance and reduce pupil absences.

Parents, whose children are of compulsory school age (5-16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1966 and could be liable to prosecution.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. Schools are therefore required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the Department for Education and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

We expect that all parents and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- ❖ encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ❖ ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- ❖ contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school

Parent Responsibility in the Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

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For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child. The legislation that applies to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act. Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Encouraging sustained, regular attendance - Lovelace encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- ✓ by providing a safe, caring and welcoming learning environment
- ✓ by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- ✓ by informing parents in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registrations
- ✓ by publishing attendance statistics
- ✓ Linking our school attendance register to a 'live' WEDUC register so that parents can efficiently view and track attendance of their child
- ✓ by celebrating good attendance
- ✓ by educating our children through assemblies and lessons in relation to the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality as a crucial part of becoming successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens
- ✓ by presenting excellent attendance certificates at the end of each half term and 100% attendance medals at the end of each academic year
- ✓ an annual celebration with the Mayor of Kingston for those achieving 100% attendance

School organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff is expected to make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times.

Headteacher and Governors:

- to ensure that the policy is being carried through effectively
- to set challenging whole school attendance targets and to publish attendance data

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and School Attendance Lead (the Deputy Headteacher)

Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis.
Hold Attendance Review Meetings (ARMs) with parents where attendance is a concern
The EWO will meet with the deputy headteacher half termly to carry out whole school register analyses, monitor persistent absence and ensure appropriate action is being carried out.
The EWO will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.
The deputy headteacher will meet regularly with the headteacher and governors to report on attendance.

Office staff:

- to oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- to follow up any absence where there has been no contact from parents before 9:30am with a text home
- to consult and liaise closely with the attached EWO
- to record all reasons for absences and lateness in the register

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- to share any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non-attendance with the deputy headteacher and attached EWO

Family Liaison Officer (FLO):

- Monitor the attendance of children with a history of poor attendance and current persistent absentees (PAs) on a weekly basis (and in some cases daily) and reporting concerns to the DHT and attached EWO as appropriate.
- to follow up any absence on the first day where there has been no contact from parents after 9:30am and before 11am with a phone call home
- Working alongside families with a history of poor attendance and current persistent absentees (PAs) and being a 'first port of call' when families are struggling to enable good attendance/ punctuality
- Attending ARMs with the EWO/ DHT to support families to improve attendance

Class teachers:

- to complete registers accurately and punctually twice daily
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the deputy headteacher
- to inform the deputy headteacher of concerns
- to be alert to signs of disaffection that may lead to non-attendance and report them to the office staff or deputy headteacher
- to ensure children receive rewards as appropriate

Registers

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, buying new shoes etc.
- excessive illness without medical evidence
- leave taken during term time which is not deemed exceptional

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996 (e.g. genuine illness). The 2013 changes of the Education Regulations 2006 must also be taken into account when considering requests for leave during term time and these state that the Headteacher may no longer grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- work experience placements
- field trips and educational visits
- sporting activities
- link courses or approved education off site
- most types of dual registration

Registration and Lateness

The school day begins at 8.50am. Children 'trickle in' to school from 8:40am, going directly into class. This 'trickle in' extends learning time, increases independence, enables a warm welcome for every child from staff at the school doors and eases congestion on the way into school. We also hope that this will help attendance and punctuality.

Morning registration will take place at 8.55am. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes and any child who arrives after the register has been taken but during this 10 minutes will be marked late (L).

If pupils arrive after the external doors have been closed, they must be signed in in the yellow book in reception. This is to ensure all pupils are accounted for in case of fire and to monitor punctuality. If a pupil arrives after the close of register without a written explanation, it will be recorded as late after close of registers (U).

Any pupil who arrives after the registers close at 9.05 am will be marked as late after close of registers (U), which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence. If a reason is given for the late arrival, for example attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be taken at 1pm for Reception, Y1 and Y2. The afternoon register will be taken at 1:15pm for Y3-Y6.

In cases of persistent late arrival to school (10 sessions over a 5 week period) after the register has closed (which results in a U code), parents will be issued with a letter warning them that punctuality must substantially improve within the next three weeks or a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) will be issued. Parents may also be invited to a meeting with the deputy headteacher or EWO regarding punctuality at any time. *Please see below for further information on FPNs.*

Escalation Process

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school.

Responding to non-attendance

On the first day of absence a call should be made to the school (there is a 24 hour answerphone to enable parents to call early if need be). In most cases a further phone call to the school would be expected on each subsequent day of absence. Once the child has returned to school a note should be provided with an explanation of absence.

If no call or note is provided this absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Frequent absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent by:

- ❖ phone call from the deputy headteacher or FLO
- ❖ letter sent home stating concern and offering support
- ❖ an additional letter sent home stating the need for additional evidence to support further absence
- ❖ meeting at school with the deputy headteacher or FLO

If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to Education Welfare.

Persistent absence (PA)

The government definition of PA is when a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. PA represents a very significant amount of time out of school. It is equivalent to 19 days over the course of the year or approximately 6 days in a term.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. PA will be referred to the EWO. These children are then monitored monthly and in many cases weekly.

Parents will be notified by letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and, where appropriate, will be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified. Where appropriate, the EWO will follow this up with a home visit.

Exceptional leave of absence

We discourage families from taking medical and dental appointments and family holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Changes of the Education Regulations 2006 mean the Headteacher may no longer grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If parents want to take their child out of school during term time they must complete a green 'Request for Leave for Exceptional Circumstances' form (see appendices).

The headteacher will consider the request to authorise an absence taking the following criteria into account:

- Reason for absence/ the exceptional circumstances*
- The child's school attendance and punctuality history (no absence will be authorised for children with less than 96% attendance in the previous or current academic year or where punctuality is a concern)
- The likely impact on the child's education
- The absence is authorised in advance
- Whether it falls within any statutory/ key stage national test window e.g. within the Year 6 SATs week

Further information/evidence is also requested to support the application for leave (e.g outpatient letter, detail of exam etc.)

If a holiday is taken without prior request, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Welfare officer will be notified and FPNs considered.

*Exceptional leave is **NOT**:

- Availability of cheap flights and/or holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Parent/carer work commitments
- Poor weather experienced during school holiday periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term, half term
- The impact of Covid or similar on booked / rearranged holidays

Exceptional leave **MAY** be:

- Grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill – and you must leave in an emergency- medical evidence should be provided
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. This must be backed up by a doctor's letter
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, eg family wedding/funeral. Additional evidence should be provided (eg Wedding invitation)

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher will consult with the EWS and the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

Lovelace school reserves the right to issue FPNs according to the 'Penalty Notices Practice Guidance for Schools' issued by AfC in 2014. Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 empower designated Local Authority officers, Head teachers or their nominated deputies, or the Police to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from schools. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) prescribe the necessary details for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme. Regulation 14 provides that each local authority is responsible for drawing up a code of conduct to ensure consistency in the issuing of FPNs. Therefore, it is the code of conduct, together with the relevant legislation and guidance that will determine how the local authority should proceed in non-attendance matters.

For Achieving for Children's 'FPN Code of Conduct For Schools' please look here: [FPN Code of Conduct for Schools](#)

FPNs may be considered appropriate when input from the EWS has failed to affect a return to school and in the following specific circumstances.

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any five week period;
- Parentally condoned absence;
- Unauthorised term time leave (includes holiday): any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave of 10 or more sessions, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a penalty notice.
- Unauthorised delayed return from extended holidays;
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) equivalent to 10 sessions in any five week period (even where the attendance for the whole academic year is above 90%).

Children Missing Education (CME) - As a school we follow the guidelines as set out in AfC's 'Education Welfare Information and Guidance for Schools' which in turn follows 'Children Missing Education' –statutory guidance for schools September 2016 which can be found [here](#).

Please also refer to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (section 10) here: [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).