



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Committee: Full Governing Body

Approved on: March 2023

Staff: SENCo

Notes: Statutory

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Headteacher: Mrs Amanda Pedder



LOSELEY FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is our task as teachers at Loseley Fields School to promote and support our children's learning and enable each one of them to achieve their full potential. We endeavour to provide a school day that excites, challenges and motivates each child, and allows them to develop as independent learners. Our organisation of their learning promotes enjoyment, perseverance and self-discipline. We encourage the children to achieve personal excellence in all aspects of work and behaviour.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The school staff, alongside the LA, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. As a staff we do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to attend 100% of the time, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher (or delegated person in the school).

1. Key Objectives

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the school day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or senior staff, any problems that deter their child from attending school;
- not take holidays in term time.

We expect that the school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every child's attendance using SIMS;
- contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- meet with the school's Inclusion Officer regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern;
- liaise with the Inclusion Officer at least half-termly, to monitor whole school attendance;
- refer children whose attendance is an on-going concern, despite their best efforts to resolve the situation, to the Inclusion Officer for additional support and guidance;
- Work with the Inclusion Officer and follow his/her advice once cases are referred to ensure that the legal process to address attendance concerns can be implemented if necessary.

2. Legislation & 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- DfE Working together to improve school attendance September 2022

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Strategies to Promote Good Attendance

At Loseley Fields we recognise that preventative work, such as the use of positive attendance strategies, is most effective in improving attendance. We endeavour to do this through:

- Providing a rich and engaging curriculum where children want to learn and are curious about the world around them as well as ensure that learning is matched to children's needs;
- Weekly attendance assemblies to celebrate good attendance from the previous week as well as the year;
- Attendance displays in class;
- Information for parents such as: attendance leaflet, half termly attendance bulletin and support for families through the HSLW.

3. School procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Responding to Non-Attendance

- When a pupil does not attend school, the parent/carer must notify Loseley Fields on the first day of an unplanned absence. For example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health. If no note, email or telephone call is received on the first day of absence from the parent/carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day via a telephone call.
- If there is no response to this call, the school will continue to try and contact the parent/carer and other emergency contacts if they are not answering their phone. If after 2 days the school have not spoken to a parent/carer or emergency contact to explain the absence, the office will inform the Home School Link Worker and Deputy Head Teacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly;

- Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily and will always be discussed with the Inclusion Officer before being requested. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.
- Dental and Medical Treatments: whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. Parents are asked to remove the child only for the duration of the appointment.
- The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.
- If there is persistent non-attendance, the school's Home School Link Worker and/or Deputy Headteacher will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the Inclusion Officer when a formal referral may be made. If a child's attendance is below 85% with 10 unauthorised sessions in a 6-week period, the school are able to make a referral to the local Inclusion Team. The school will discuss any attendance concerns with the Inclusion Officer even where this threshold hasn't been met.

Child Missing in Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) refer to all children who are of compulsory school age and are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision). In Surrey, a school refers a pupil to the Local Authority for further investigation if s/he has been continually absent for more than 10 school days without permission and the school has carried out reasonable checks and failed to establish the child's whereabouts and the reason for absence.

If a child continues to be missing from school for 20 days and the school and LA have exhausted enquires and has been unable to locate the pupil and his/her family, under the regulations, it is permissible for the child's name to be removed from the school roll and details of the child to be uploaded to the DFE Lost Pupil Database. Loseley Fields Primary School would only remove a child from roll in this way if confirmed by the LA.

See Appendix 4 of Surrey LA's current CME Policy : [Final-CME-Policy-2017-ver-2-updated-nov17.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Responding to lateness

- When a pupil is late for school they should enter the building via the front office so that they can be recorded as being present.
- Registers open at 8.40am. Children will be recorded as being late if they arrive after 8.50am but before 9.20am when the registers close.
- Any child arriving after close of register time (9.20am) will be recorded as late after close of register (U coded) and this denotes an unauthorised absence.
- A monthly late report is compiled by the office staff and given to the Deputy and HSLW to analyse.
- Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Team.

Request for Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance on the Surrey County Council website and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays to be taken in term time.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. In exceptional circumstance, when leave in term times is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school office.

Loseley Fields considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in 'Responding to Non-Attendance'
- 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

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register. The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional. Should absence be taken without the Headteacher's authorisation the case may be referred to Inclusion Team and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address (if appropriate and known).

The pupils' school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Team.

Deletions from registers

Schools to be aware there is legislation around taking children off roll (Education Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2013.

- If a child moves schools during the year, they come off roll on the day they start the new provision.
- If the parent puts in writing that they intend to home educate, the matter should be referred to EHE and a copy of the letter attached. If the case is open to Inclusion a copy of the letter should be provided to the IO. The child can only be taken off roll if the parent specifies in writing that they intend to home educate.
- If the parent advises that they are moving abroad and school have any reason to suppose that this might not be true they should refer the matter to the Inclusion Service to investigate. Otherwise it is good practice to request this advice in writing from the parent so that this letter can be placed on the school file in explanation for taking the child off roll.

Deletions after continuous absence of not less than 20 school days

When taking children off roll due to twenty days absence and in order to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education Act 1996, guidance states that schools must ensure that the following applies:

That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and

- at no time was the absence during that period authorised
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
- both the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

If any parts of this are not complied with, the pupil cannot be taken off roll and this may result in the school being vulnerable to legal action and having to put the pupil back on roll.

In the case of a pupil where the parent has requested a leave of absence of over twenty school days it is important that the school notifies the parent in writing that failure to return within the twenty days could result in the pupil being taken off roll. Once the absence begins, and within the twenty days, even if the school believe that the family are not at home, they must endeavour to make enquiries with the family and are advised to write to the home address stating that if the pupil does not return by a specified date, they will be taken off roll. At the same time, a referral should be made to the Inclusion Officer, as representative of the LA, for enquiries to be made.

If the pupil does not return by the specified date and enquiries have been made, the pupil can be taken off roll and the parents should be notified. It is not enough just to warn parents that the pupil may be taken off roll, enquiries must be made by school and the LA.

It is recommended that an entry is made in the School Attendance Policy to state that pupils may be at risk of losing a school place in cases of unauthorised absence.

For further information regarding when children can be taken off school's roll please contact your IO or the SW Inclusion Service on 01483 518187.

Non-starters

In DfE Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice on School Attendance (August 2013) it advises that if a school is expecting a child to arrive at the beginning of term, the child **MUST** be put on the Admissions and Attendance register.

In the event of the child not arriving, the child must be marked as absent and enquiries made with Admissions. If Admissions confirm that the child has started at another

school, the child can be taken off roll. However, if there is no record of the child starting anywhere else, school must refer

to the Inclusion Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made.

4. Legal Sanctions

The Inclusion Team, who act on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60, per child per parent, within 21 days or £120, per child per parent, within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as multiple holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head teacher. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
- Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

5. Attendance monitoring

At Loseley Fields we have an Attendance Team who meet regularly to discuss the attendance of pupils falling below 95%. The team look at each child's individual attendance reports to ascertain the nature of the absence. In particular, the team monitor the persistent absence list. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Once the nature of absences has been ascertained, the team will decide as how to support the child in attending school regularly (action taken is made on a case by case basis. This could include: working with the HSLW, a meeting with a parent/carer, a warning letter regarding or referral to the local Inclusion Team.

We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors annually.

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