



## Loughton School

### Attendance Policy

#### 1. Aim Statement

Loughton School sees regular and punctual school attendance as essential for all pupils if they are to be successful and take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. To this end the school aims to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.

#### 2. Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below). (see section 5)

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

#### 3. Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Loughton School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

##### **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the headteacher. At the end of each year pupils who have 100% attendance will be presented with a certificate.

## **Parents/Carers**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance.

## **School**

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

### **4. Registration**

Prompt and accurate registration is essential. Registration is both a legal requirement and ensures an orderly start to morning and afternoon sessions.

- a) Registers should be filled in, using a pencil, at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and returned promptly to the office. ('Code' and 'Week' should be completed and 'Number Present' entered for each session.)
- b) If a pupil arrives after the register has been returned to the office they must be entered in the late book. They will then be registered 'late' for that session.
- c) If a pupil arrives 30 minutes or more after the closure of the register they must be entered in the late book at the office. They will be registered as **unauthorised** absence for the session unless an appropriate explanation is received.

### **5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Parents should be aware that it is the school that decides, namely the headteacher, whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. A letter or other communication does not in itself authorise an absence.

From September 2017, Loughton may refer parents to the local authority for action if children are taken out of school to go on holiday for five consecutive days or more during term time.

The Department for Education has removed the discretion of headteachers to grant leave in term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. It is up to the discretion of the headteacher to determine, on a case by case basis, what are 'exceptional circumstances' and the number of days a child can be away if leave is granted. If leave is not agreed the school can enforce a Fixed Penalty Notice.

***Children who are late without good reason after registration closes (9.00) also receive an unauthorised absence mark.***

### **6. Absence, Expectations and Follow-up Attendance**

- a) Parents should notify the school, either by telephone – 01908 665971 Option 1 (answering service available) or in person, on the first day of absence, giving the reason and, if possible, the likely duration of the absence.
- b) If a pupil is absent and there is no notification, the office will contact the parents to ascertain the reason for absence.
- c) If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note, or message in the Home-School Diary, the class teacher will follow up the absence until a satisfactory response is received.

- d) All absences should be verified and entered on the 'Reason for Absence' sheet, using the approved codes (see Appendix), by Wednesday of the following week. Any outstanding absences will be investigated by letter, generated by the office.
- e) If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent the headteacher will write to the parents and invite them to a meeting at school to discuss the pupil's attendance record. Should the absences not improve then the headteacher will consider making a referral to Children's Social Services.

### **Lateness**

If a pupil is persistently late, more than 4 times in a half-term the school will write to inform them of our concern. If the lateness continues, parents will be invited into school to discuss the problem.

### **7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Monitor Absences (including persistent absence)**

- Loughton School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- An exciting, varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs and learning styles.
- Attendance data, including persistent absence, will be monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy.
- 100% attendance certificates will be awarded to classes at the end of a week.
- 100% attendance certificates will be awarded to individuals at the end of each term.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, parents evenings etc) of the importance of regular attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into the school upon their return.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The headteacher will make a termly report to the governing body on attendance matters.
- The headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Regular visits to be made to feeder schools, and secondary schools, to ensure the smoothest possible transfer of pupils.

Note: Persistent absence is where the number of absences for a pupil is over and above the limit set for each term. The limit is calculated on the length of the terms and is accumulated i.e. autumn term absences → autumn + spring terms absences → autumn + spring + summer terms absences.

### **Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

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 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 school can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

### **The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **Office/reception] staff**

**[Office/reception]** staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## APPENDIX

### Absence Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (not Dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Holiday annual family (agreed)
I	Ill
J	Interview
L	Late
M	Medical/Dental
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after register closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
#	School closed to pupils
Y	Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age abs
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend / No mark recorded