

Attendance Policy - Pupils

Next review Date: Term 5 2017 (review cycle annual)

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning and improve outcomes
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets and legislation

Being at school

Primary school education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted upon promptly. Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring their children's good attendance. The policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Childrens Act, Education Act, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from Local Authorities. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind their learning. Children who are regularly absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school **daily** to inform us of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns and act upon them when necessary
- monitor the attendance of all children and identify trends in attendance and punctuality
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- regularly inform parents of the attendance percentage of all pupils and support pupils whose attendance falls below national expectations
- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly
- meet regularly with the School Attendance Team to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare Services. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare Services may result in further actions, e.g. a Fixed Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- will notify the Local Authority (LA) after 15 days sickness
- will notify Children Missing in Education Department after 5 days absence, with no contact from parents. We reserve the right to contact Education Welfare Services for unexplained absences

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils the playgrounds are supervised from 8.45am.

- by law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil
- registration takes place at 09:00am close at 9:05am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority
- afternoon registration is taken at 1:00pm
- persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through schools attendance team and may be referred to Education Welfare
- pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day

- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school

- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time
- parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time
- pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return
- where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site
- if a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person*

Absence

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance on the school's website and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during these assessment periods. Teacher Training Days when the school is closed for children, are also published for the year ahead.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time **will NOT be authorised**.

Non-school attendance includes any day when a child should be in attendance at school and they are absent without the authorisation of the school and includes unauthorised holidays during term time **and persistent late arrival at school beyond the registration period**.

Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued for persistent lateness where the child arrives after the closure of registration and this is coded U in the register.

Non-Attendance: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have removed the reference to holidays during term time and now provides that a leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the school consider that the leave of absence should be granted due to **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

What amounts to "exceptional circumstances" is a matter for the discretion of the Head Teacher and should be judged on a case by case basis but it is unlikely to amount to an exceptional circumstance if it is merely claimed that a holiday abroad can only be afforded in term time or that a parent is unable to take leave during school holidays (this is a matter between the parent and their employer).

- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare Services will be notified
- all parent(s) should apply for leave **no less than 14 days prior** to the period of absence and failure to do so will automatically result in the absence being unauthorised

Fixed Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

Fixed term penalties will only be issued in circumstance where the Local Authority is satisfied that the criteria for prosecution would be met if the option of a fixed penalty notice is not taken up by the parent. The circumstances in which a notice may be issued are:

- Where a child is absent from school due to unauthorised absence of 15% or above over a six week period. This will include lateness after the close of registration when code U is used.
- Where a child is present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of any exclusion.
- the amount payable on issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- **Importantly** Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to **each** parent, for **each** child.

Truancy Patrol

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer, for each child.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. Again, the Fixed Penalty Notice fines are as follows: £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Education Welfare can also investigate legal proceeding against parents under section 444 Education Act 1996 or apply to family proceeding court for an Education Supervision Order to secure regular attendance.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Hawthorn Tree Primary School holds regular attendance panel meetings and any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be invited to attend. If there is no improvement in school attendance the school Attendance Team will refer to Education Welfare Services who work in partnership with school and parents in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

Education Welfare Services may also issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers.

Before a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school 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 the school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- a new home address if appropriate

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Services.

Appendix One

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow 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. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove 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.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions

Appendix Two

Reference Lincolnshire County Council ‘Fixed Penalty Notices’ / ‘Code of Conduct’ Final Jan 2014

Introduction

- This code of conduct is issued by the Local Authority (LA) in accordance with the requirement of regulation 14 of The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007 following consultation with the police and schools in Lincolnshire as required by the Regulations.
- The purpose of the code is to ensure a consistency in approach to the issuing of fixed penalty notices throughout Lincolnshire and to provide a clear, consistent and transparent approach to the use of the fixed penalty system for ALL school types, the police and parents in Lincolnshire.
- Regular and punctual attendance at school or any alternative provision is essential for children to realise their educational potential and a legal requirement for all children of compulsory school age.
- Schools have a multitude of tools available to ensure regular school attendance and such strategies will be sufficient for the majority of families where attendance is an issue. However, fixed penalty notices are an option where other strategies have been unsuccessful and should not be used as a first resort.

Full document Available on Lincs CC website

HTS May 2016

