



## Lambton Primary School Attendance Policy

To be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Arrivals and departures policy
- Child protection policy

### Rational

This policy has been written to promote good attendance in school and also to formalise the procedures if a child's attendance is causing concern. This policy will be presented to staff and governors and will form part of the child care procedures. Details of the staff absence procedures are included in the staff handbook and follow the Local Authority agreed procedures

### Aims

At Lambton Primary School we aim to

- Be tolerant, sensitive and understanding showing, respect for the rights, views and property of others
- Encourage children to develop a responsible and independent attitude towards their work and towards their role in society.
- Encourage children to achieve their full potential in terms of academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation and spiritual awareness.
- To support children and families who encounter difficulties maximising their child(ren)s attendance.

All members of the school community work towards the school aims by:-

- Valuing children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs.
- Fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community.
- Providing a well ordered environment in which all are aware of behavioural expectations and are supported to meet these expectations.
- Offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures.
- Encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and attitudes.
- Working as a team to encourage and support each other.

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As a school we aim for attendance of 95% to help all children to achieve to their full potential. We recognise that this can only be achieved by maximising the number of sessions children attend school.

### Objectives

- To formalise the system for recording attendance in school
- To formalise the collection of attendance data
- To formalise the uses of attendance data in school
- To formalise the rewards used to recognise good attendance
- Identify and clarify the role of parents in promoting good attendance
- To set out triggers at which formal monitoring of attendance will be initiated
- To set out triggers and procedures to deal with non-attendance at school
- To ensure the welfare and safety of all children in school.

### Persistent Absence

From September 2015 a child will be deemed to be a Persistent Absentee if they have a 10% or more non-attendance rate. This definition has changed from 15%, which was the previous PA definition.

The following table shows the estimated cumulative absent sessions for 15% and 10%.

	15 per cent	10 per cent
Half-term 1	10 or more sessions 5 or more days	7 or more sessions 3.5 or more days
Half-term 1-2 (autumn term)	22 or more sessions 11 or more days	14 or more sessions 7 or more days
Half-term 1-3	30 or more sessions 15 or more days	20 or more sessions 10 or more days
Half-term 1-4 (autumn term and spring term combined)	38 or more sessions 19 or more days	25 or more sessions 12.5 or more days
Half-term 1-5	46 or more sessions 23 or more days	31 or more sessions 15.5 or more days
Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)	56 or more sessions	38 or more sessions

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	28 or more days	19 or more days
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### **Background**

The DFE will publish PA rates at both 15% and 10% for the academic year 2014/15. This will commence with the statistical first release for the Autumn Term 2014, scheduled to be published in May 2015.

The DFE have confirmed that they do not intend to continue publishing data for the 15% threshold in future years they have stated that their intention is to raise expectations regarding PA and move both practice and thinking forward in this respect.

### **Recording Attendance Data**

Records of attendance are recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The methods for completing the register can be found in the staff handbook. Absences are recorded and authorised by either the office staff or class teacher depending on whom the parents contact. These records are sent to the office for safekeeping and analysis. Records of children coming into school late are kept in the office.

There is a telephone log kept of parents calling or emailing school to say their child is absent and a file of letters, either handwritten or emailed, from parents held in the office. Letters authorising absence must be sent down to the office in the register on the day they come into school.

If there is no reason for the absence given on the first day of absence by 9.30am then the school office will try to contact parents either by telephone or text.

If the school have cause to believe that the absence is not genuine or the child is classed as a PA, all non-attendance will be unauthorised, unless supported by a medical certificate or letter.

### **Changes to term time holiday allowance (effective September 2013)**

Following amendments to the 2006 regulations the reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is a Leave of Absence during Term Time form for parents to request such leave. A copy of the response, detailing the decision will be sent to the parent and a copy held on file and if unauthorised will serve as a warning notice for a Fixed Penalty Notice. The headteacher may request the Local Authority to issue a FPN and the LA will make a decision based on their role statutory role in attendance. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **Attendance Data**

Each Friday weekly totals for each class and a school average are calculated. On a termly basis average attendance for each child who is causing concern is calculated.

Attendance data in school is used to:

- Reward children for good attendance
- Track children with poor patterns of attendance
- Reported termly to the governing body, LA and annually to the DFE for publication.
- School attendance figures are published in the league tables, school prospectus and on the school website.

### **Rewarding Good Attendance**

Good attendance in school is rewarded in the following ways:

- Individual stickers for those who have 100% attendance.
- Weekly award for the class with the best attendance.
- Termly award for the class with best attendance.
- An annual prize by the school for full attendance over the year

### **Working with Parents**

The definition of a 'parent' is wider than the legal parental responsibility category and has an additional category of 'a person who can exert influence in a parental capacity'. That could be a step parent, a parent's partner or if a child

lives with other family member(s) or friend(s) those persons will be responsible for ensuring good attendance.

Parents will be reminded of the importance of good attendance and their responsibility of ensuring good attendance at all induction meetings and through the school prospectus and regular reminders in newsletters. At these times they will be informed that they must telephone or email school on the first day of any absence.

Parents, who persistently keep children at home, are on the attendance monitoring register or find getting children to school difficult will be offered support from the school and the Head teacher.

### **Monitoring of attendance**

A child must be of statutory school age for parents to have action taken against them for non-attendance. That is not to say that attendance is not monitored and advice given and support offered.

Formal monitoring of attendance may be triggered by the following:

- Attendance falling below 90% in either a given term or over an academic year.
- A pattern of broken attendance e.g. frequently missing a particular day or lessons, that gives a pattern of 4 broken weeks in any 10. Referral Threshold:
- No improvement in the pupil's attendance following intervention by school and there are a minimum of 10 unauthorised absences during the previous 6 weeks (some absence must be recent i.e. in the last two week and all unauthorised absences are correctly coded i.e. there are no "N" codes included in the 10 unauthorised absences) the school should:

### **Informal**

Parents will be informed with a letter of concern if their child's attendance falls below 90%. If after a period of informal monitoring and support attendance does not improve, a decision will be made by the head teacher to move into formal non attendance procedures as outlined below.

### **Formal Non Attendance Procedures**

#### **Stage 1**

Parents will receive a formal letter of concern. A copy of this letter is kept on file. Further close monitoring will take place to see if attendance improves or if there is a genuine reason for absence such as illness.

Where concerns are broader and there are underlying concerns, the school will try to secure the parents' consent to seek additional support through a Strengthening Families Referral.

If attendance does not improve then the pupil will move to stage 2

### **Stage 2**

At this stage the Chair of Governors will be informed, who may make the decision to interview the parents. At this meeting the school will present an attendance report and the meeting will be minuted and a parental contract agreed. This will include a monitoring period and be signed by school and parent(s).

If the parent(s) does not respond to the offer of a meeting or there is no improvement then the case will be discussed in full. If the CoG is satisfied that everything had been done to engage with the parent(s) and the child, where appropriate, and ensure that appropriate support has been offered to improve school attendance then the case will be referred to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3**

The school will refer the case to the Attendance Team of the Local Authority. The Attendance Team role is to discharge the Local Authority's statutory duty to investigate and enforce school attendance through the statutory powers available. The Attendance Team does not monitor pupil attendance as that is the school role.

The Attendance Team can only accept referrals where the pupil is of statutory school age and has necessary recorded unauthorised absence to meet the referral threshold.

The Attendance Team who will discuss the case with the school and look for evidence of support and challenge.

They will then make contact with the parent(s) and discuss their perception of the issue and the child's personal circumstances. The officer will make a decision if there is no improvement;

- The LA may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice warning notice. If there is no improvement then a FPN will be issued
- The case may be referred to Magistrate's Court for prosecution where a Criminal Conviction could be awarded.

### **Fixed Penalty Notice**

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From September 2014 under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority may use the additional option of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. This FPN can only be issued by the Attendance Manager to ensure consistency across the City. The cost is £60.00 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 if unpaid after that. Parents must be informed by writing of the possibility of a FPN being issued in correspondence from the Headteacher regarding their child's attendance. There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning may be issued, but only two FPN's can be issued in an academic year.

All correspondence relating to non attendance will make reference to the possibility of a FPN being issued by the Local Authority.

### **Children Missing from Education**

Where children have been identified as being missing from education the school will follow the procedures set out by the Local Authority and immediately inform the attendance team. If the child is subject to a Care or Protection Plan Children's Services Social Care Team will be informed on the first day of any absence where reason for absence has not been given.

### **Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored annually in line with all safeguarding policies by the staff and governors.

Ratified by Governors; 13.6.19

Next review; summer 2020

