



Larkfields Infant School and Larkfields Junior School

Joint Attendance Policy

The Pupils Registration Regulations 1956, 1991 and 2006 state that every school should keep an attendance register. The school also acknowledges the amendments made to the act in 2013. Registers are therefore legal documents and must be completed accurately and in accordance with these regulations and the advice issued in DES Circular 11/91. Details about the completion of attendance registers are kept in the School File issued to staff. Attendance details are recorded on the school's computerised administration system which enables easier data analysis.

Previous regulations regarding approving absences (particularly those caused by family holidays) no longer apply. Absences will only be authorised if they are caused by genuine illness or by 'exceptional circumstances'.

Any application for term time absences caused by exceptional circumstances must be made on a 'Leave of Absence' form marked for the attention of the Head Teacher at least four weeks prior to the event if possible. The application will be considered by the Head Teacher and a response given within five working days.

If, at this point, parents/carers wish to appeal against the decision, they should put their case in writing within 10 working days to be addressed to the Chair of Governors of the school. This appeal will be considered by a designated governor on behalf of the Chair. A final response will be issued after a further 10 working days.

Unauthorised absences will be recorded on a child's ongoing record and will be passed on to their next school. At the termly Full Governing Body meetings the Head Teacher will report on issues affecting levels of attendance in school and extended levels of unauthorised absence in light of the 2013 guidance.

The Governing Body has agreed that it may be necessary to issue a fixed term penalty notice (fine) in some cases of unauthorised absence. A fixed term penalty notice may be issued when a child has had more than 6 unauthorised absences (3 days) or has been late (i.e. 15 minutes after the official start of the school day) 10 times in any rolling 6 week period. The penalty is set at £120 and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60. The penalty will be issued per child, per parent (including any person who has daily responsibility for the child,) once within any rolling 6 week period. The notice is payable to the Local Authority. Once a penalty notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

Obviously, in cases of genuine illness, children should be absent from school and parents/carers should inform the school of this. The school may ask Parents/Carers to produce a doctor's note in cases of extended absence.

The school considers that standard optician and dentist appointments should be made out of school times and do not constitute exceptional circumstances. However, appointments at the doctors, hospital and orthodontist can be harder to arrange and these may be authorised in some cases.



Larkfields Junior School has worked closely with Larkfields Infant School to develop a consistent approach to attendance. Both Head Teachers use the same agreed checklist to determine what might constitute an 'exceptional circumstance'.

Each child's Annual Report will show the total possible sessions the child could have attended in the year and how many authorised and unauthorised absences the child had in the period.

Whole school attendance figures and the number of late marks recorded for the previous term are communicated to parents in the first newsletters of the Spring and Summer terms.

Parents must inform the school of the reason for their child's absence. A message on the first day of absence is essential and if this is not received, office staff will try to contact parents in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the child. If phone messages are taken by the office or the parent speaks to the school administrator or the Head a note will be recorded in the school office. Teachers should equally take a brief note of verbal communication about absence given by parents at the beginning or end of the day but a written note should also be obtained from the parent whenever possible. All these form evidence that the absence is authorised. Absence notes will be held in the school office as 'Evidence'. Every authorised absence should be supported by a parental letter or a record held in the office.

If no explanation of absence is given by the parent it is the responsibility of the school office staff to make enquiries of the parent/carer as to the reason for the child's absence. If the child is absent without explanation for four days or more or if the general pattern of attendance, including persistent lateness, gives cause for concern, this should be referred to the Head Teacher who will in turn make enquiries or pass on the concerns to the Family Service. Any child who has an ongoing attendance figure that is less than 90% will be referred to the Family Service by the Head Teacher unless there are special circumstances. Unexplained absences of Looked After Children or those who have a Child Protection concern file should be investigated immediately and referred to the Children's Social Care department after two days.

Although it is obviously the responsibility of the parent to inform the school about their child's absence, it is the school that decides whether or not the absence can be considered as authorised.