

# LANDYWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL



## **Attendance Policy**

**Updated Feb 2018**

## **Introduction**

This policy is based on the guidance from Staffordshire's Attendance Policy and the Department of Education document 'School Attendance: statutory guidance and advice'. October 2014.

It has been written to assist the teachers, pupils, parents and governors to meet the statutory requirements on school attendance.

This policy must be read in conjunction with other related school policies:

- Behaviour
- Equal Opportunities
- Inclusion
- Racial Equality
- Special Educational Needs

### **The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:**

The Department of Education has published research into the effect that 'missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams'.- Feb 2015 . The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.

The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.

At primary school, pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 are a quarter less likely to achieve at least expected if not, greater depth in reading, writing or maths tests, than those with no absence.

## **Principles**

At Landywood Primary School we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realize their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

### **Good attendance**

At Landywood Primary School, we recognise and celebrate good attendance. Certificates for whole class attendance and punctuality are given out in our 'Celebration Assembly' on a Friday. The class in each Key Stage, with the most certificates each term can choose to representatives to go to a local book shop and choose new books for their class library.

Children who achieve 100% attendance in each ½ term receive a prize and a certificate. Children move to the next level of prize for every ½ term they achieve 100% attendance.

Level 1 – pencil

Level 2 – badge

Level 3 – pen

Level 4 – torch key ring

Level 5 – A6 Notebook

Level 6 – neoprene book bag/laptop case

Children who achieve 100% attendance in two or more consecutive years receives an Attendance medal.

### **School Responsibilities**

Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse, or representatives of the Local Support Team, in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.

We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance of individual children, should this become a concern.

### **Parents or Carers Responsibilities**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason
- Try to make medical, dental, or other appointments outside the school day
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all opportunities available to him/her
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child is school by 9am every day. Any lates after 9.30am are recorded as unauthorised absence. 10 unauthorised late marks in a 12 week rolling period maybe subject to a statutory late fine.

### **Attendance data and targets:**

The national average for attendance is 96%. At Landywood Primary School, we aim to meet this. Statistically, a child who has 95% attendance has lost 10 days of learning.

### **Definition of persistent absence:**

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing 10% or more of possible sessions. (90% or less)

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties getting their child/ren to school should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may request for an Early Help Referral to be put in place.

If attendance does not improve over an agreed monitoring period a Staffordshire County Council Penalty Notice may be issued followed by court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **Admissions Register:**

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details, including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least three years and inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 if they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on elective home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Have been permanently excluded.

### **Elective Home Education:**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at [enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

### **Our Procedures related to absence:**

- Parents must notify school that a child is absent and for what reason on the first morning of the absence. Please ring the school on 01922 270077, before the close of register at 9:00am
- At the end of the month, if no reason for the absence is provided the register will be marked as unauthorised
- School opens for pupils at 8:35am and the doors close at 8:45am prompt
- The official start time of school is 9:00am. All children should be in class by this time
- Any child arriving after 8.45am and before 9:00am should enter via the school office
- Children who arrive after 9:00am should sign in using the electronic system in the school office. These will be coded as 'L' on the attendance register.
- Children arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session – these will be coded as 'U' on the attendance and will be used when calculating penalty notices
- If your child is not present during registration, then a text message will be sent from the school office. Please make sure the office has any updated numbers
- We are required to take an attendance register during the afternoon in addition to the morning. The morning and afternoon count as two attendance sessions
- We encourage and recognise good attendance and punctuality through our school rewards system

### **Catagories for absence:**

- *Illness* - The school should be notified by 9am on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence to advise of nature of the illness and a predicted return to school date. The parent/carer should contact the school office by phone on 01922 270077 , messages can be left regarding your child's absence on the school answering service or texts can be sent to school via the text service on 07786 201170  
If a child needs longer than the predict timescale, a parent/carer should advise the school of a new return date  
If a child is ill, while at school, the parents will be notified and asked to collect the child. No child will be sent home without an adult. This will be classed as the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence and the procedure above should be followed.
- *Holidays* – Parents/carers wanting to take children on holiday during term time should complete a request for leave form (see appendix 1) and handed into the school office at least two weeks prior to the requested dates. The Head Teacher may not grant leave during term time for family holidays. Leave may only be granted in exceptional circumstances for short periods of time, the length of which is decided by the Head Teacher. This is explained more fully in Appendix 1, which also includes a request for leave letter. The letter should be completed by someone with parental responsibility for the child concerned. The requesting adult will be notified of the outcome by letter (see Appendix 2/3). Families taking an unauthorised holiday will be fined, this fine is applied from the first day of any holiday period taken. Both parents, regardless of home address maybe subject to a fine.
- *Religious Observance* - Landywood Primary School follows school term times that take Christian holidays in to account. Families from other faiths may request a day for religious observance. The school will treat absence as authorised. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. Parents requesting a Religious Observance absence should complete a request for leave form (see appendix 1) and handed into the school office at least two week before date requested.

- *Gypsy, Roma or Traveller* - when families are travelling for occupational purposes a request for leave form (see appendix 1) should be completed and handed into the office at least two weeks before the dates requested. This absence is given a 'T' code and is agreed with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

### **Monitoring and Recording**

- The Headteacher reports attendance data to governors on a termly basis
- Our attendance policy is reviewed on a bi-annual basis and updated with any changes in line with DfE and Local Authority guidance
- Class teachers/the school office retain a log of absence and will record reasons for absence on the school register
- Parents receive a half termly update on their child's attendance and any absences are shown. These are printed on green paper for attendance between 96% and 100%, yellow paper for attendance between 91% and 95% and red paper for attendance below 90%.
- The Inclusion Manager and the Home School Link Worker meet with the every six weeks regarding group and individual attendance and discuss actions that may need to be taken to address these, including fixed penalty notices. Information regarding safeguarding concerns are also discussed when relevant
- When a child's attendance drops below 93%, Letter 1 (see appendix 3) may sent to the parent/carer advising there is a cause for concern regarding attendance.
- When a child's attendance drops below 90%, Letter 2 (see appendix 4) may be sent to the parent/carer advising that medical evidence is required for all future absences.
- The head teacher must inform the Local Authority of the absence of any child for a continuous period of ten days or more without school's permission. School should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days, but presents a cause for concern, this may include home visits from school representatives or asking the police to conduct a safe and well check on the child.
- Where possible, medical or dental appointments should be made out of school hours. We require evidence in the form of an appointment letter
- Leave of absence during term time is not permitted unless under exceptional circumstances
- Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and analysed each half term. This is to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for all pupils, including vulnerable groups.
- The school uses Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2018.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

*Mr Clewer - Headteacher*

*Mrs Williams - Assistant Headteacher/Inclusion Manager*

*Mrs Altree - Home School Link Worker*

*Mrs Redfern – Admin Assistant*

**Legal Framework:**

- *The Education Act 1996 ;*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013*
- *The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;*
- *The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;*
- *Crime and Disorder Act 1998;*
- *The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;*
- *The Education Act 2005;*
- *The Education and Inspections Act 2006;*
- *The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;*
- *The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and*
- *The Education and Skills Act 2008.*
- *The Equality Act 2010*



Request for leave during term time

Parents/Carers are kindly requested to read our Attendance Policy before completing this form.  
**This form must be submitted to the school at least 2 weeks before the requested start date.**

I would like to request that leave of absence from school during term time to be considered for:

Date of request:		For office use only		Date received:			
Child 1 (full name)		Current attendance	%	LY attendance	%	Previous leave taken	days
Child 2 (full name)		Current attendance	%	LY attendance	%	Previous leave taken	days
Child 3 (full name)		Current attendance	%	LY attendance	%	Previous leave taken	days
Child 4 (full name)		Current attendance	%	LY attendance	%	Previous leave taken	days
For the period		from		to			
Type of leave requested (please tick appropriate) Please complete relevant section below.		Holiday		Religious observance		Travelling for occupation	
The exceptional circumstances and reason for the request <b>(Holiday only)</b>							
Nature of religious observance/ religious body contact details <b>(Religious observance only)</b>							
County travelling to Second school details for dual registration purposes <b>(Travelling for occupation only)</b>							
Signatures are required from both parents with parental responsibility regardless of home address.							
Signature of 1 <sup>st</sup> parent/carer				Print name:		Date:	
Signature of 2 <sup>nd</sup> parent/carer				Print name:		Date:	
For office use only		Not agreed		Signed (Head Teacher)		Date:	
Agreed							

### School Letter Leave Agreed

(Parent/carer(s) name and address) Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school from ..... to.....

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.**

Our key priority is to ensure that your child(ren) are as successful as possible and are able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would therefore ask that you support your child in catching up on the time they will miss in school.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Clewer  
**Head Teacher**

## School Letter Leave Not Agreed

(Parent/carer(s) name and address)

Date

Dear (Parent/carer(s) name)

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school from ..... to.....

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are not exceptional. **Therefore, if your child is away from school during this period it will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.**

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct.

The Penalty Notice fine would be:-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. Our key priority is to ensure your child(ren) are as successful as possible, are able to reach his/her full potential and gains maximum benefits from his/her educational experience.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

If attendance does not improve over an agreed monitoring period a Staffordshire County Council Penalty Notice may be issued followed by court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Clewer  
**Head Teacher**

Dear Parent/Carer

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced important changes to the law for families wanting to take holidays in term time.

### **Term-time holidays**

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) previously allowed Head Teachers 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. Head Teachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

However, the changes make clear that head teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers will now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Parents may receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking their child out of school during term time without consent from the school. From September 2013 these Notices now cost £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

As a Local Authority we understand the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects that they should be in school during term time.

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support Head Teachers in challenging parents that do ignore the law.

Further information can be obtained from [www.dfe.gov.uk](http://www.dfe.gov.uk).

Anne Birch  
**Commissioner for Learning and Skills**

Dear Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ ,

At Landywood, we feel attendance is of the upmost importance in ensuring children achieve their potential. Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning and although there will be times when absence is unavoidable, we stress that children with attendance level of below 96% is not acceptable.

It has been recorded that your child's attendance is currently at \_\_\_\_\_%.

I am sure you will agree that this level of absence must be affecting your child's studies. We will be monitoring your child's attendance over the next 3 weeks and hope to see an improvement.

- When children are absent from school they can easily fall behind with their learning.
- Absence can cause problems with friendship groups and self-confidence.
- All holidays count as absence and holidays taken early in Autumn term or during school assessment or examination times are particularly disruptive to a child's education.
- If your child is often absent due to illness we may be able to give extra support or take advice from the School Medical Service.

Mrs Altree is now working each morning as our Parent Link Worker in school. As part of this role, she is available to support families who may have difficulties with attendance for a number of reasons. If you wish to discuss any attendance matters with Mrs Altree please call the school office on 01922 270077 to make arrangements to speak with her.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Williams  
Assistant Head Teacher

Dear Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ ,

At Landywood, attendance is of the upmost importance in ensuring that children achieve their potential. Attendance levels are directly linked to your child's attainment.

Attendance of **90%** means that a child is missing from school for an average **half a day a week** over the year this equates to **4 weeks**.

Missing on average **one day a week** equates to **6 weeks** of missed learning and an attendance level of **80%**.

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, the Education Welfare Officer from Staffordshire County Council will be notified and will contact you to arrange a meeting in school to discuss this further.

May I remind you that, as a parent you are responsible for your child's full time education and that failure to do so may result in legal action.

It has been recorded that your child's attendance is currently at \_\_\_\_\_% and is now being monitored by the Education Welfare Officer.

**Any further absences due to illness will be recorded as 'unauthorised' unless supported by medical evidence, and may be used to issue a formal warning of a possible Penalty Notice.**

Please contact Mrs Altree, our Parent Link worker if you require support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Williams  
Assistant Head Teacher