



Low Moor C. of E. Primary School

Aiming for Excellence

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed by: Strategic Planning Committee

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Approved by: Full Governing Body

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Position: Chair of Governing Body

Signature:

Date:-

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PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Statement of intent

Low Moor C. of E. Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Low Moor C. of E. Primary School is committed to:

- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Education Act 1996
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
 - Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
 - Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- 1.2. This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - DfE (2016) 'School attendance'
 - DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- 1.3. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:
 - Complaints Procedures Policy
 - Behaviour and Discipline Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Pupil Attendance Policy and procedures of Low Moor C. of E. Primary School.
- 2.2. The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.3. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 2.4. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Pupil Attendance Policy and procedures of the school.
- 2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Pupil Attendance Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

- 2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 2.7. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.8. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.9. Parents are expected to notify school of their child's absence as set out in point 5.
- 2.10. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.

An **“authorised absence”** as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have not been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Frivolous absence such as shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school during the day without permission.

- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:

- Missing 15 percent or more of schooling across the year **for any reason.**

4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Absence procedures

- 5.1. Parents are requested to contact school by 9.00am on each and every day of their child's absence. A voicemail may be left on the school's answerphone by calling 01274 600797 and selecting option 1. This is available 24 hours a day.
- 5.2. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 5.3. A text message will be sent to priority contact 1 of any child who has not had their absence reported on the first day that they do not attend school, followed by a phone call to all contacts, in order of priority, until contact has been established and a reason for the child's absence has been provided.
- 5.4. If all attempts to make contact are unsuccessful, a visit to the child's home address may be undertaken.
- 5.5. In some circumstances, it may also be necessary to request a welfare check by relevant agencies.
- 5.6. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer.

6. Contact information

- 6.1. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.

6.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if their details change.

7. Attendance officer

7.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.

7.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer will refer the case to the LA which may issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

8. Lateness

8.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

8.2. The school day starts at 9:00am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

8.3. Registers are marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

8.4. The register closes at 9:15am. After this time, pupils will receive a mark of unauthorised absence.

8.5. Pupils attending after the register closes will sign in on the Inventory system to show they are on site.

8.6. After lunch, registers are marked at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

9. Term-time leave

9.1. At Low Moor C. of E. Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

9.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

9.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.

- 9.4. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- 9.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 9.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 5 percent for any reason
- 9.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines issued by the LA.

10. Religious observances

- 10.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 10.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

11. Appointments

- 11.1. As far as possible, parents must make every effort to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 11.2. Where this is not possible, a copy of the appointment card/letter should be provided to the school office.
- 11.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 11.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

12. Rewards for good attendance

To promote and encourage good attendance:

- 12.1. Staff will work with the child and family, where concerns have been highlighted. They will set up a system of rewards to encourage attendance;
- 12.2. Each term, pupils who achieve 100% attendance receive a certificate to acknowledge their excellent attendance;
- 12.3. Each week, the class with the highest attendance receives a certificate.
- 12.4. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance, for the year, will receive a celebratory special award at the end of the school year.

13. Monitoring and review

- 13.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 13.2. Low Moor C. of E. Primary School's attendance target is set annually by the governing body and is published on the school website.
- 13.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.
- 13.4. This policy will be available to parents on the school website.

Appendix 1 - Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Low Moor C. of E. Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Staff must record reasons for pupil absence. Where possible, the office will enter reasons for absence on the register if known;
2. If there is a sudden or unexpected decline in a child's attendance, the attendance officer will contact parents and offer support;
3. Every term an analysis of attendance data is undertaken by the headteacher, attendance officer and office manager
4. Parents will be notified by email if attendance falls below 95% for the term and the attendance officer will continue to monitor attendance in the subsequent term.
5. If attendance does not improve, parents/carers will be offered support to help improve attendance;
6. Should attendance continue to be a concern, then the attendance officer will invite parents/carers to attend a meeting in school to address the issues;
7. If attendance does not improve after consultation with the parent, a referral to the Education Social Work Service will be considered. A referral can only be made if:
 - There is evidence of action taken in school to resolve the attendance issue;
 - The absence record must contain unauthorised absences;
 - A pupil's attendance record falls below 85%;
 - There are 10 unauthorised absence sessions in a six-week period;
 - Two weeks' continuous absence where there is a failure to establish contact or parents are refusing to return a child to school;
 - A child will be considered 'Missing in Education' in this case.

APPROVED

The headteacher will decide the amount of time a pupil can be away from school, taking into account their attendance record.

Requests **will not** be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before or during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence for any reason
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 5 percent, for any reason



Lateness and truancy

Good attendance doesn't just involve being present in school – it also involves punctuality. You also have a responsibility to ensure that your child arrives to school on time, and stays in school during the day.

All pupils are expected to be in their classrooms by 9:00am every day. If pupils are not in their classrooms by 9:15am, they receive a late mark – this is an **unauthorised absence**.

If the school believes a pupil is truancying, immediate action will be taken – this can escalate to penalty notices.

How can I help?

You can help in many ways:

- Encourage good attendance by making sure your child goes to school regularly.
- Take an interest in your child's school work.

- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of absence from school.
- Support our school in our efforts to control inappropriate behaviour.
- Inform us on the first day of your child's absence, and keep us updated throughout the absence period.
- Cooperate with our school to make sure your child overcomes any attendance problems.
- Discuss planned absences with the headteacher and apply for permission well in advance.
- Only take your child out of school during term time where the absence has been **authorised**.

Attendance matters!

Don't underestimate the importance of 100 percent attendance. Over a whole year, even one day missed can have an effect on learning:

- **98** percent attendance means **four** school days missed
- **95** percent attendance means **10** school days missed
- **90** percent attendance means **19** school days missed
- **80** percent attendance means **38** school days missed
- **Five minutes** late each day means **three** school days missed

Please help us promote good attendance throughout our school – you really do play an important role.

For more information about attendance in our school, please see our Pupil Attendance and Registration Policy, available on the school website.

Appendix 2

Low Moor C. of E. Primary School

School attendance: what parents need to know



Why is good attendance important?

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school, and to establish positive life habits that are necessary for future success.

Through regular attendance, pupils can:

- Build friendships and develop social groups.
- Develop life skills.
- Engage in essential learning and other school social events.
- Achieve to their full potential.
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.



All parents should promote good attendance and work in partnership with their child's school to provide a cohesive approach.

What does the law say?

All children of compulsory school age – between 5-16 – must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring that this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making appropriate alternative arrangements.

Once you have registered your child at a school, you are also legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. If you fail to do this – even if your child misses school without you knowing – legal action can be taken against you by the Local Authority. It is a legal offence to fail to ensure your child attends school regularly.



Legal action can involve a penalty notice or being taken to court.

Parents also face the risk of imprisonment and parenting orders. Parenting orders involve attending a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.

A penalty notice of £60 may be issued as an alternative to prosecution, but this will rise to £120 if it is not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay a penalty notice will usually lead to **prosecution**.



Can my child ever be absent?

When a pupil is absent from school, this will be classified as either **'authorised'** or **'unauthorised'**.

The governing body and headteacher decide which absences are granted as authorised. Authorised absences are only permitted for valid reasons, e.g.:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observances
- Family bereavement

Wherever possible, parents should always try to arrange medical and dental appointments during school holidays or after school hours.



What are unauthorised absences?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential or reasonable.

Unauthorised absences can include:

- Forgetting school term dates
- Oversleeping
- Absences which have not been explained
- Arriving at school after the register has closed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without explanation
- Day trips or family outings
- Problems with uniform/clothing
- Birthdays and holidays

Holidays during term time

The school **cannot** be expected to authorise an absence for a holiday during term time.

Taking holidays during term time means that pupils miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for pupils to catch up on work when they return to school. Only in **exceptional circumstances** may a holiday be authorised during term time – this will be decided by the headteacher, following strict guidelines set by the LA.

Exceptional circumstances do not involve cheaper costs, family availability or weather conditions.

You can be fined if you take your child on holiday during term time without permission from the headteacher.



Requesting absences

Authorisation of absences are at the discretion of the headteacher.

All absences, including for holidays, must be requested as far in advance as possible. If you think your child needs to be taken out of school, you should discuss the reasons with the headteacher as soon as possible.

If the headteacher is satisfied with the evidence and the notice period, they will authorise the absence.

