



# Attendance

Policy updated by:	Z Omar-Davies
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Agreed by Headteacher:	N Anderson



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This Attendance Policy is adopted from the Leicester City Council extranet.

## **Introduction**

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important**

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you information on attendance in our regular contact with home;
- Provide you with reports (frequency) on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

## **Understanding types of absence**



By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (ie condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. If a child has less than 100% and there is any unauthorised absence, the position is that the child could have attended more regularly and this will be a concern.

We monitor all pupil absence closely and where the school has concerns about your child's attendance, we will be in touch with you about this.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents/carers are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All children who fall into the PA category are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).



## Absence Procedures

### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Call school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you either then or at a later point.

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- We will raise concerns about your child's attendance during weekly calls and/or during Review Meetings.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our *Attendance Lead – Zaheera Omar-Davies*, if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. This could be by a Police Officer.

NB Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

## Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## The Education Welfare Officer

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court.



Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.)

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on 0116 454 5510. They can also be reached by e-mailing [education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk).

## Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness**

The school day starts at **9.15am** and we expect your child to be in class soon after that time. All children sign into school using the Inventory system as they arrive. We accept that all our children arrive by taxi from across the city so make allowances for this and, as a rule, do not mark our children as late. We ask all parents to ensure their child is up and ready in time for the taxi every morning. We will monitor arrival times closely, and any persistent lateness is addressed with the family and transport services as appropriate. There may be times that your child is on an agreed reduced timetable, in that situation we ask that your child arrive in school at the agreed time.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher/Deputy Head or Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking them away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no automatic entitlement** in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance. Parents are required to comply with the school's procedure for requesting leave of absence for their child. In



accordance with the law, agreement will only be given where the Headteacher considers the reason for the request to be exceptional in nature.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school office. It is important that all parents/carers are aware that requests for leave should be made prior to making any bookings. Also, that the decision made by the Head teacher will be confirmed in writing and without this written confirmation, it cannot be taken that there is agreement to authorise all or any of the absence.

Any period of leave taken without the written agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Penalty Notices are fines of £60 which increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay by the 28<sup>th</sup> day will usually mean that the Local Authority proceeds to the Magistrates' Court in relation to the parent's failure to ensure regular attendance.

### School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school is 90%.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.



## The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence



<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances



## **Security of registers**

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three year. The registers must be safely stored.

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

Mrs Nicola Anderson - Headteacher

Mrs Zaheera Omar-Davies - Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Lead

Ms Jo Green – Attendance Officer



## Traveller Communities – Annex for schools who have traveller children

Traveller children of compulsory school age are expected by law\* to attend at least 200 sessions out of the possible 380 sessions per school academic year. The use of the Traveller code (T) for more than 180 sessions could indicate that the pupil has failed to meet this requirement. Please note that absence for travelling purposes should only be coded “T” when the parent is engaged in trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. If this is not the case, the child is required to be in school as usual.

\*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

It is important that there is consistency between schools in relation to the approach to the absence of Traveller children and this school therefore adopts this policy.

The attendance of children from travelling families is treated with equity and fairness taking into account the cultural needs of our Traveller community; the culture of travelling families can require travel for genuine work purposes and is recognised nationally.

However, it has also been recognised that Traveller children’s attendance tends to be very low and can result in significant problems with achievement, attainment and whole school attendance performance management.

Of particular importance is:

- a) The coding of the absence of Traveller pupils in schools
- b) Movement among Traveller families; children may leave and return at the parents’ will and at very short notice, with no indication of the whereabouts of a child and/or his/her welfare
- c) This in turn makes it difficult for the school to exercise the duty of care to children and to provide a good education to each and every one of our pupils. It is important that the school is able to monitor, assess and review children’s development and to ensure that children are progressing.

Whilst respecting the need for Traveller families to conduct their day to day businesses, it is important for everyone to work together to maximise the opportunity for all children to achieve and attain through improving attendance and punctuality in school. Traveller families are therefore subject to the same limitations and constraints in regulation as all other families albeit with discretion where travel is for business purposes.

Traveller families will be requested to complete a Traveller Request Form before a child’s period of absence from school commences where travel is for business



purposes and/or the child will be accessing education in another location. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the form. Requests for absence of any other nature should be made using the schools leave of absence request process. Information is available from the school office.

**Please note the following:**

Absence linked to travel for the reasons listed below will not constitute travel for work purposes. The school must conform with regulations to provide equality for all pupils and set the foundations for a fair Attendance Policy for the whole school population:

1. Bereavement
2. Weddings
3. Visiting Relatives
4. Absence the family feel is religious observance where this is in excess of 1 day exclusively set apart by the religious body
5. Pre-wedding preparations and weddings
6. Birthdays

**Where a family does not inform the school or seek permission for absence before departure, the absence will not be authorised.**

**Traveller Pupil Tracking Form - Guidance**

The purpose of the form is to record the proposed leave of pupils from the travelling communities, recording details of their local residence and their current contact numbers. The purpose of the form is also to record information about intended travel dates and the expected date of return. If the family is staying on a Local Authority site in another area of the country, the details can be recorded and confirmed.

If the student is dual registered with a school outside of the local authority, this information should be confirmed and the dual registration procedures undertaken accordingly.

The purpose of this process is to support good practice, to encourage traveller families to share their proposed arrangements prior to leaving and to ensure that effective contact is maintained. The Traveller Pupil Tracking Form should assist in reducing cases of children deemed to be missing in these circumstances and therefore strengthen the safeguarding procedures in place, as well as ensuring that children's school attendance is maximised.

Together, we anticipate a continued improvement in attendance at school by working jointly with parent(s)/carer(s), specialist support from the Traveller Education Service and the Education Welfare Service to achieve better educational outcomes for our Traveller Children and Young People.



## **Appendix 1**

### **TRAVELLER PUPIL TRACKING FORM**

In the interest of pupil welfare the school and parent/s will complete the following information together ***before pupil(s) travel:***

<b>Child's Name:</b>	Child's dob:
Base 1: Leicester address with post code:	

<b>Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/ Carer(s) Name(s):</b>
Base 2: Address with post code (other residence):
Reason for travel:
Landline telephone number:
Mobile telephone number:
Email address:

### **TRAVEL DATES**

Travel Date	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Expected Return date	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6

### **School details where child is dual registered:**

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Education Packs provided Y / N

### **Please note:**

Traveller children whose whereabouts are unknown can be deleted from the school roll in the same way as other (non-traveller) pupils after thorough investigations have been undertaken and the pupil has not been located. In all cases, the school complies with the LA and Maintained Schools Protocol on the Management of Children Missing From Education.