



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved by:	<i>Interim Executive Board</i>
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### 1. Aim

The aim of Laycock Primary School's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to ongoing pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

Laycock Primary School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality and as such, it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that where possible children are attending school on time, every day. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying and behaviour.

## 2. Legal framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

- The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full time education suitable
  - a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
  - b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
  
- A person begins to be of compulsory school age
  - a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
  - b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.
  
- A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year
  - a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following, b) if they attain that age on that day, or
  - c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

Laycock Primary School is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

## 3. Introduction

School Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to both academic and social development, which in turn will improve the life chances of children and young people.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience. Laycock Primary School is committed to working closely with parents and carers to achieve the maximum levels of regular and punctual attendance possible.

# 4. Roles and Responsibilities

## 4.1 Governing Body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body (in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team) will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff;
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance;
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff;
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year;
- Take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff;
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

## 4.2 School Leadership Team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
  - Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
  - Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review;
  - Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
  - Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
  - Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job;
  - Report to the governing body each term on attendance records, data and provision;
  - Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
  - Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
  - Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.
- Ensure that attendance data is used to raise parent awareness with regards to the school's attendance and its future targets.

## 4.3 Teachers and Support Staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed;
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

## 4.4 Parents and Carers,

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Ensure that where possible their children attend school on time, every day.
- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by arranging medical and dental appointments outside of school hours;
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance;
- Do not take their children out of school during term time. Parents/carers may request term time leave in writing, using the appropriate form, but the Headteacher will authorise time off in only the most exceptional circumstances.
- **Sign a home-school agreement.**

## 4.5 Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents/carers, and the school timetable;
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing any difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Be ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools required and on time for all classes.

Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their class teachers. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

## 5. Categories of absence and procedures for reporting absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is given to the school. ***Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that either calling the school or providing a note for an absence does not automatically mean it will be authorised.*** Staff will make it clear on the school register when recording attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

**When a child is absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and every day thereafter to give the reason for absence.**

### 5.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on each day of absence. In some cases, the school will require medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Additionally, the school may wish to refer to the school nursing service where there are health concerns or if there is a view that illness is being used to cover other reasons for absence. The school may also wish to seek the advice of the family GP, having first discussed the matter with parents/carer to seek their permission to do this.

### 5.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

### 5.3 Authorised absences

There may be some exceptional circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- Illness - High temperature/vomiting and diarrhoea, emergency medical/dental appointments which unavoidably falls in school time.
- Religious observances.
- Family bereavement.
- Visits to prospective new schools, external exams or educational assessments.
- Suspension from school.

### 5.4 Unauthorised absences

These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which "leave" of absence has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the school requesting that the Local Authority use sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Some examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily – this can be due to child care arrangements, to look after siblings/relatives or because parents are unwell. In this case, alternative arrangements should be in place to ensure the child attends school;
- Shopping trips;
- Birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the Headteacher.

## **5.5 Family holidays and term time leave**

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and any term time leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents/carers should not remove their child from school during term time without having first requested a leave of absence in writing from the Headteacher.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will only be authorised in the most extreme circumstances.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

## **5.6 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they are absent from school for 10% or more across the school year for whatever reason. The reasons can be both authorised and unauthorised.

Absence below 90% will do considerable damage to any child's educational achievement and future prospects. We will need the full support and co-operation of all parents/carers to both avoid and where necessary tackle this.

Pupils who have reached the PA level will be tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. The parents/carers of PA pupils will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher and/or School Attendance Lead to discuss their child's attendance.

## **5.7 Religious observance**

Laycock Primary School recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

Please note, that authorisation will only cover the actual day of religious observance and any days prior to, or after, the event will be deemed to be unauthorised.

## **5.8 Late arrival**

Records are kept of those pupils who are late. School starts at 8.55am. Pupils who arrive after this time should go straight to the school office to be signed in to the late book and give a reason for their lateness. They will be given a late card to give to their teacher and an L marked in the register. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for. Registers are closed at 9.25am. Children arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (Attendance code U) unless a specific reason for the lateness is provided.

## 5.9 School action: following up absences

Class registers are passed to the school office at the end of the registration period. Where a child is absent without reason the parents will be contacted. This is commonly known as 'first day calling.' Where no reason is given the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Parents/carers will be also be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

## 5.10 Address attendance concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%. Where a pupil's attendance falls below this level, parents will be informed by letter. If there is further absence parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting at school and a plan to improve attendance will be agreed.

If a child's attendance drops below 90% they are considered to be persistently absent. If parents have received a letter and had a school meeting but attendance does not improve, they may be issued with a penalty notice – minimum £60 – by the Access and Engagement Service in Islington.

Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on learning and any work that they have missed.

## 5.11 Thresholds for intervention

Threshold	Intervention	By whom
100-96%	Rewards for this (and for improved attendance) are given out termly.	Class teacher records and monitors this.
96-92%	Attendance is monitored.	Admin team.
92-90%	Children at risk of becoming PA – parents are informed by letter and a meeting may be required with the attendance lead. Attendance will be monitored at this point and a target card used if appropriate.	Attendance lead. Home-school support worker.
90-85%	PA threshold – meeting with parents.	Headteacher.
Below 85%	Depending on the reason for the absence, the school may decide to request statutory action.	Referral made by Attendance Lead to Islington's Access and Engagement Service.



