



# **Leighfield Academy**

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2015

Adopted by the Governing Body 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015

## Rationale

Leighfield Academy promotes the view that regular, punctual attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our pupils and we take seriously our responsibility to monitor and promote this. We feel the whole school community has a responsibility for punctuality and attendance and we work closely with parents and carers to promote regular, punctual attendance.

## Our Aims

Leighfield Academy aims for children to

- ◆ Reach their full potential
- ◆ Develop a positive self-image
- ◆ Be responsible and make informed choices

We

- ◆ Provide a supportive and caring environment
- ◆ Promote high achievement
- ◆ Encourage independent learning

Regular, punctual attendance is important to ensuring children reach their full potential, promotes high achievement and gives opportunities for making informed choices. Our supportive and caring environment promotes a positive atmosphere in which children feel safe and valued and want to come to school.

**Is your child missing out on learning?**

**Each child's attendance can be summarised as:**

99%+	<b>Excellent</b> -attendance this level will help your child to enjoy and achieving along with their peers.
97-98%	<b>Average</b> -this level of attendance will now be impacting your child's learning. You should now be working with the school to improve this attendance.
96%	<b>Poor</b> -The cumulative effect of this level of absence will now impact on your child's overall levels at SATs and up to GCSE
Below 96%	<b>Unacceptable</b> -Your child is now falling into "Persistent Absence". This is of serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and may lead to your prosecution for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. The school will start not to authorize all absence and you may have to provide medical evidence for absence due to illness.

### What is expected of Leighfield Academy?

- ◆ To create an ethos the children want to be part of
- ◆ To meet legal requirements
- ◆ To monitor attendance and punctuality and work with parents to resolve poor attendance or punctuality
- ◆ To work with the Local Authority Social Inclusion Development Officer and to inform the LA of unexplained absence and of any other children in irregular attendance
- ◆ To set out clear expectations for parents
- ◆ To follow Local Authority procedures when a child transfers between schools
- ◆ To report attendance and punctuality to parents as part of the child's annual report

### What is expected of parents?

- ◆ To offer a reason for any period of absence before 9.10am on the first day of absence, and daily thereafter
- ◆ To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- ◆ Only allow days at home for genuine illness
- ◆ To ensure their child arrives on time. A reason should be provided for any lateness
- ◆ To take family holidays during holiday periods, not during term time

Leighfield Academy does acknowledge that many children will have some unavoidable absence because of illness. It is important that children are not sent to school when they are unwell, as they will not be receptive to learning and it is unfair on other families to spread germs unnecessarily. It is especially important in the event of a stomach upset that the child has at least 48 hours clear at home after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.

### What is expected of the Local Authority?

- ◆ To provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory age children
- ◆ To provide support to schools, academies and parents to fulfil their legal duty
- ◆ To enforce the law. This may include taking a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place an Education Supervision Order.

## Term time leave of absence

From September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 removed provision for headteachers to grant term time leave of absence in 'special circumstances' and only allow leave to be granted in 'exceptional circumstances'.

In exceptional circumstances (once in a life time event) the headteacher may grant you leave of absence during the school term. This is not a parent's right and will not include time out for a family holiday. Parents/carers must apply to the headteacher to request leave of absence who will judge each application on its own merit. (Appendix 1)

The Headteacher cannot authorise leave of absence if it overlaps with beginning or end of term.

At Leighfield Academy we will consider factors such as:

- The nature of the request and why it could not be taken in school holiday
- General welfare of the pupil and family circumstances
- Pupil's educational needs and ability to catch up on work missed
- Proximity of SATS and other examinations
- The frequency of such requests from the pupil's parents
- Amount of time requested
- Whether the parent gave advance notice

'Exceptional' circumstances will be regarded as one-off situations. Should a Service family wish to cite serving overseas as a reason for absence the Army Welfare Office (or equivalent) will be asked to verify the application.

If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised.

The following will **not** be considered as 'exceptional':

- Relatives coming to visit
- Family holiday (including cheaper holidays in term time)
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends who have different half terms or holidays

## Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone. Reasons such as "unwell or ill" cannot be authorized; you will need to inform the school of the symptoms.

### Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been sick during the night and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

### Examples of Authorised Absence

- ◆ Sickness (if absences are excessive, a doctor's note will be required)
- ◆ Emergency medical/ dental appointments
- ◆ Days of religious observance
- ◆ Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement)
- ◆ Approved sporting or musical activity/ competition / examination
- ◆ Fixed term exclusion

### Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable, for which no explanation for the absence has been given, the absence has never been properly explained, and planned term time absence that has not been agreed by the headteacher prior to the absence.

### Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- ◆ Frequent absences attributed to minor ailments but not supported by medical evidence
- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Birthdays
- ◆ Day trips
- ◆ Looking after siblings or sick parents
- ◆ Unexplained absence
- ◆ Holidays.

**Unauthorised leave of absence will be reported to the Local Authority and may lead to prosecution under The Education Act 1996.**

Further guidance can be found at

<http://www.gov.uk>

## Separated Families

Where parents are separated, leave of absence cannot be granted unless both parents with parental responsibility agree to the request being made.

Leave of absence request forms signed by one parent must be accompanied by a letter of consent from the other parent. Leave of absence request forms must be signed by the parents with legal responsibility for the child. If a parent does not reside with the child due to family separation, an application must also be received in writing from the absent parent; this must accompany the request by the residing parent, and is the responsibility of both parents to provide the information required by the school. Leave of absence requests will only be accepted from the child's legal guardians and not by extended family members.

## Absence for Regular Activities Related to Gifted and Talented Children

Parents requesting absence for children who have a talent to take part in coaching or competitions are asked to supply documentation from the professional covering the following three points:

- When the lessons are (and why they are unable to be taken out of school hours)
- Any events the pupil is likely to participate in which will require absence from school
- Their long-term prospects and their expected impact on schooling

## Flexi Schooling

There is no legal obligation for us to agree to a parents request for flexi schooling. This includes children who are electively home educated where parents also want their children to be enrolled at Leighfield Academy. Any requests for a place will follow our Admissions Policy.

## Missed Work

If a child is absent for a prolonged period for medical reasons, class teachers may send work home to minimise the negative impact on the child's education.

Teachers are not expected to set work for absent pupils where the absence is unauthorised or due to a holiday being taken in school time. If parents decide to remove their child from school they must understand that there will be a negative impact on the child's education.

## Penalty notices

These will be issued by the Local Authority for absence from school in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-controlled absence
- Term time absence which has not been previously agreed by the Headteacher or when permission has not been previously sought.
- Persistent lateness.
- Absence that has not been authorised by the headteacher

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least 10 sessions (5 school days) in an academic year before the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

Where a Penalty Notice is issued, each parent is required to pay a fine to the Local Authority.

This fine equates to £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days; £120 per parent per child if paid within 22-28 days. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

The DfE have indicated that the fine is due to increase during the next academic year to £125 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days and £250 if not paid before within 22-28 days.

## Our Procedures

- ◆ The morning bell is sounded at 9.00am. Registration is taken at 9.10am. Pupils are expected to be settled in class for registration at 9.10am. Pupils arriving between 9.10 and 9.40am will receive a late mark. Any pupil arriving after 9.40am will have been marked as absent and an absence code will be recorded in the register according to the reason given.
- ◆ The afternoon register is taken at 1.10pm. Pupils are expected to be settled in class for registration at 1.10pm.
- ◆ Parents should telephone Leighfield Academy before 9.10am on the first morning of a child's absence.
- ◆ If no explanation is received, office staff will phone the parents.
- ◆ Pupils who arrive late (after 9.10am or 1.10pm) must report to the office to be signed in.
- ◆ Pupils who are leaving early before the end of the day must report to the office to be signed out.
- ◆ The headteacher monitors attendance and lateness. Where there is a pattern beginning to emerge, the parents are contacted by letter (appendix B).

- ◆ If there is no improvement, the headteacher will phone the parents and arrange a meeting to discuss the situation or contact the parents by letter (appendix B).
- ◆ If unresolved, the headteacher will contact the Local Authority Officer.

### **Rewards: Ways for parents to encourage attendance:**

- Ensure that your child has the correct uniform and equipment .
- Ensure that school uniform, including PE kit, swimming kit, pens pencils are ready the night before. Encourage your child to help you to do this.
- Find out regularly your child's absence and keep you own record.
- Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to attend if they feel supported and parents speak positively about the school and their class teacher. If you have any concerns speak to the school about them rather than share them with your child.
- Phone the school as soon as possible to tell them of any absence, the reason and when you expect your child to return.
- Only allow days at home for genuine illness.
- Avoid any absence from school for reasons other than your child's illness.
- Have good routines at home to ensure homework is completed and know the school day routines.
- Praise and reward good attendance: even small successes eg going in to school promptly.

### **Other tips to help secure good attendance:**

- If there is a problem with your child's attendance, talk calmly to your child and listen to the explanation. There is always an explanation. It may seem trivial to you but it's serious enough to make your child anxious.
- Talk to the school to resolve issues. They may be able to help and support you and your child. You are not alone.
- Be particularly watchful and supportive in the run up to test and aware of homework deadlines.
- Ensure your child has completed homework tasks on time.
- Help them catch up with missed work, missed day doesn't mean missed work.
- Remember to praise your child.

Appendix 1

**Application for Authorised Absence, Other Than Through Illness p1**

This form is to be completed by the Parent/Carer and forwarded to the Headteacher at least 10 school days before the period of absence.

Parents no longer have the right to remove children from school for reasons other than illness. In accordance with legislation, absences can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Please refer to our attendance policy for further details.

Name of child/ children	
Dates of absence	
Exceptional circumstances requiring absence during term time.	
<b>I understand that taking my child out of school will result in work being missed and will affect the learning and achievement of my child.</b>	
Signed (with parental responsibility)	Date
<b>Notes:</b> <b>1. Separated Families</b> Where parents are separated, leave of absence cannot be granted unless both parents with parental responsibility agree to the request being made. Leave of absence request forms signed by one parent must be accompanied by a letter of consent from the other parent.	

**Application for Authorised Absence, Other Than Through Illness p2**

This form is to be returned to the parent in advance of the dates of absence requested.

For office use

Child's Current Attendance.....%

Permission received from both parents in the case of separated families

Letter received from employer if request is for work reasons

Absence authorised by school

Absence unauthorised by school

(Reasons.....  
.....  
.....)

**Warning:**

**The Local Authority may decide to prosecute under The Education Act 1996 if you choose to take unauthorised term time holiday.**

Signed.....

Mrs D. M. Sedgwick

Headteacher

## Appendix B Sample Letters

### Lateness- Sample First Letter

Date.....

Dear .....

I notice from the year ..... register that ..... has now been late on 10 occasions.

Punctuality is extremely important in school as lateness not only disrupts the learning of your child but also the rest of the class. Although a few minutes may not seem long, 5 minutes lateness per day amounts to 25 minutes per week adding up to over 3 whole weeks in the year.

If you would like a copy of our attendance and punctuality policy, it is available on our website or I would be pleased to let you have a copy

I hope you are able to resolve the situation to ensure ..... arrives on time from now on.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D. M. Sedgwick

**Lateness- Sample Second Letter**

Date.....

Dear .....

I notice from the year ..... register that ..... continues to arrive late on a regular basis.

Please can you contact the office to arrange an appointment to talk to me about this matter so that we can work together to solve it.

If you would like a copy of our attendance and punctuality policy, it is available on our website or I would be pleased to let you have a copy

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D. M. Sedgwick

**Attendance- Sample Below 96% First Letter**

Date.....

Dear .....

I notice from our attendance data that .....’s attendance has now dropped below 96%, which is classified as Persistent Absence and has to be reported to the Local Authority.

Regular, punctual attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for your child. Any absence from school has a detrimental effect on your child’s learning and is likely to affect their progress in school and their end of key stage assessment results.

I hope you are able to resolve the situation to ensure ..... attends school regularly.

If you would like a copy of our attendance and punctuality policy, it is available on our website or I would be pleased to let you have a copy.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D. M. Sedgwick

**Attendance- Sample Second Letter**

Date.....

Dear .....

Following my previous letter dated.....I notice from our attendance data that .....  
.....'s attendance is now .....%

Please can you contact our office to arrange an appointment to talk to me about this matter so that we can work together to solve it.

If you would like a copy of our attendance and punctuality policy, it is available on our website or I would be pleased to let you have a copy.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D. M. Sedgwick