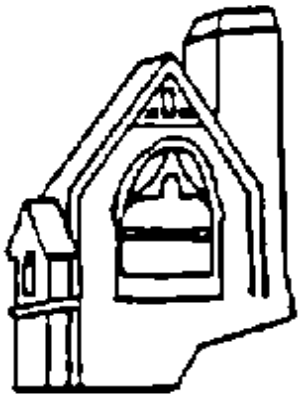
LIONEL WALDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated: September 2015
Review Date: September 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate the reason for an absence and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

2. Definitions

2.1 **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 unwell and the parent telephones or sends an email to the school office to explain the absence.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not be an authorised absence.

2.2 **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away without the permission of the school.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. This includes children who arrive after 9.30 a.m. These absences will affect the child's overall attendance record which is monitored by the Education Welfare Service and remains on their school file.

2.3 **Lateness**

School starts at 8.55 a.m. After 8.55 am, the school doors will be locked and the classroom registers will be taken. Parents or carers who arrive at school after the doors are closed must bring their child in through the front entrance. They must sign their child in the late book, giving a reason for the lateness.

Children will be recorded as:

- Not known ('N') if, at the time of registration, it is not known by the class teacher why the child is missing from class.
- Late ('L') if the child has arrived at the school between 8:55 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. and this is recorded in the late book.
- Unauthorised absence ('O') if a child arrives at or after 9:30 a.m. without the permission of the school and a parent.
- Authorised absence if a child arrives at or after 9:30 a.m., and this has been authorised by the school, with the relevant code for type of absence (see list of absence codes at end of this document).

3 What happens when a child is absent

3.1 When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, using the appropriate code, or, if the reason has not yet been established, recording 'N'. At 9.30 a.m. each morning, office staff will check the class registers and begin contacting parents/carers of any child who is absent but whose absence has not been reported by a parent/carer. Calls to parents/carers will be made by 10.30 a.m.

3.2 **On the first day of a child's absence, parents are asked to contact the school office to give the reason for the absence and to contact the office as early as possible on each subsequent day of absence.**

3.3 If a child has a medical or other necessary appointment, parents should contact the office prior to the day of absence. If a child is absent due to illness for longer than 5 school days, a medical certificate is required.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The office staff will then be in contact as soon as possible with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child. If no contact is made with the parent/carer and there are concerns about the child's well being, a home visit may be made or other agencies contacted as appropriate.

4 Requests for leave of absence

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we understand that there are circumstances where a parent may request leave of absence for a special reason. The absence notification form is available on the website or from the school office. The absence notification form should be completed by the parent and returned to the school office at least one week before the first day of requested absence.

4.2 In exceptional circumstances, parents may request leave, for example to visit families living abroad. The maximum which can be requested in any Key Stage is two weeks; however this is at the discretion of the Headteacher. If, after four weeks, the child fails to return, the school has the right to remove the child's name from the roll. The place is then offered to anyone on the waiting list.

5 Long-term absence

5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for an extended period, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a recurring absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

6.1 If a child has a significant number (10% or more unauthorised) the parent(s) or carer will be sent a letter, accompanied by the Education Welfare 'School Attendance' Leaflet and a copy of the child's attendance record. The letter reminds parents/carers about the importance of regular school attendance, as any absence may interrupt their child's academic progress and may have an effect on maintaining friendships. The letter also points out that regular attendance is a legal requirement. This is recorded on the **record of letters sent** report. Should the pupil's attendance improve but the improvement fail to be sustained, a further copy of the letter may be sent at a later date.

If attendance does not improve a second letter is sent to the parents/carers asking them to meet with the head teacher and discuss the absence. Enclosed with this letter is the Education Welfare 'School Attendance' Leaflet and a copy of the child's attendance record. This letter is copied to the Education Welfare Officer and is recorded on the **record of letters sent** report.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance and no satisfactory explanation for the absences, parents/carers are informed by letter that their child is now at risk at becoming a persistent absentee pupil. This means attendance is now at 90% or below. As such, a referral to an Education Welfare Officer will be considered [sickness]and a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings may be incurred by parents or/and carers.

6.2 The Headteacher has regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and will involve the EWO to deal with repeated unauthorised absence, as well as low attendance rates.

6.3 The Governing Body, supported by the Local Authority (LA), reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Attendance monitoring

7.1 Lionel Walden Primary School monitors attendance carefully and considers the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting their own priorities for the coming year.

7.2 Through newsletters and by personal contact, parents are reminded about their responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly.

7.3 The EWO monitors attendance regularly and meetings are arranged/letters sent home as appropriate to encourage good attendance and remind parents/carers of the effects of low attendance.

7.4 Parents will be encouraged to understand the full implications for both their children's academic progress and their social groupings when they miss school.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and

seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The responsibility to authorise or requests for absence has been delegated to the Headteacher. Letters are sent to all parents who request absence and the seriousness of unauthorised absence is clearly explained.

8.2 The schools will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of seven years.

8.3 The rates of attendance will be included in the report to governors by the Headteacher and targets for improvement will be agreed with the LA.

8.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for bringing it to the attention of the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carer.

Code	Description	Code	Description
C	Other authorised circumstances	O	Unauthorised absence
E	Excluded	P	Approved sporting activity
I	Illness	R	Religious observance
L	Late (before registers closed)	V	Educational visit or trip
M	Medical/dental appointment	X	Non compulsory school age absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	G	Unauthorised term time holiday