

LODGE FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



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Review date: Summer 2017

2nd Review date: Summer 2018

Person Responsible: Helen Turner

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Lodge Farm Primary School is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children within this community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Statement of Intent

Hertfordshire County Council expects the Children's Services and all schools to work closely together in partnership with parents in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their child's school if he/she is absent. This should be done as soon as possible - preferably on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time

Responsibilities - Schools

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.

For pupils of compulsory school age, schools are required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Lodge Farm will:-

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. Schools should recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. They should also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school.
- Produce school attendance policies which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff

Attendance

Helen Turner, Headteacher, has overall responsibility for attendance and closely monitors and reviews the attendance of all children. The **minimum expectation** is that children attend school for 95% of the time. Where attendance falls below 95%, the Headteacher writes to parents, on a termly basis, offering support and reminding them that children are classed as “persistent absentees” once their attendance drops below 90%. (***Appendix A***).

In cases where attendance falls below 85%, the Headteacher writes to parents explaining that in order for future absences to be “authorised”, medical evidence will need to be provided such as copies of prescriptions / doctor’s letters etc. The Headteacher’s letter also offers support and explains that the matter will be brought to the attention of the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) from Herts County Council.

The AIO meets regularly with the Headteacher to review official attendance registers and identifies children whose absence is a cause for concern and takes further action where necessary.

A termly attendance and punctuality letter is sent out by the Headteacher to all families advising of the overall percentage attendance figure calculated up to the end of term and class punctuality figures. Attendance and punctuality are also mentioned in the school weekly newsletter.

Attendance Awards

The school works in partnership with parents and the Attendance Improvement Officer to promote good attendance.

At the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms, Gold Attendance Certificates are awarded to all those children who have achieved at least 98% attendance.

At the end of the summer term, Red Attendance Certificates are also awarded to every child who has received a Gold Attendance Certificate for each of the 3 terms during the academic year.

Punctuality

It is crucial that children are punctual in order for them to start the school day with the rest of their peers. Learning starts during registration time - arriving late compromises childrens' progress and disrupts the learning experience for all the other children in the classroom.

Arrangements For The Start Of The School Day Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

The Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 school day commences at 8.55am when children should be in the classroom ready for Registration.

A whistle is blown at 8.50am to indicate that the classroom doors are open and that the children can come into the class. A second whistle is blown at 8.55 am to signify the official start of the KS1 and Foundation Stage school day. Classroom doors are shut at this point.

(If parents need to speak to their child's teacher we encourage them to make an appointment through the office or, if it is a 'quick' enquiry, they should go promptly to the classroom door at 8.50am. This will enable us to begin the school day on time.)

Arrangements For The Start Of The School Day Key Stage 2

The Key Stage 2 school day commences with Registration at 8.50am.

A bell will ring at 8.45am to indicate that the children should line up in alphabetical order with their teachers on the playground. Parents are then expected to stand behind the wall. A second bell will then ring at 8.50am to signify the official start of the KS2 school day. Parents leave the playground at this point and teachers lead the children swiftly to their classrooms to start their learning

(If parents need to speak to their child's teacher we encourage them to make an appointment through the office or if it is a 'quick' enquiry, they should go promptly to the playground at 8.45am. This will enable us to begin the school day on time.)

Late Arrivals

Children who arrive late for school (ie. after 8.55am for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 or after 8.50am for Key Stage 2), must report directly to the School Office where their names are recorded, along with their time of arrival. They are subsequently marked as "Late" on the official attendance records together with the number of minutes late. Where a child arrives late for school, after 9.15am (ie. after the registers have closed), this is deemed to be an "Unauthorised" late arrival and is recorded as such on the official attendance records.

The Headteacher closely monitors punctuality and writes on a half-termly basis to the parents of children who have been late on 3 or more occasions during the half term. If punctuality continues to be a problem during the following half term, the Headteacher will write asking the parent to attend a meeting to discuss the situation and will also bring the matter to the attention of the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) from Herts County Council. Sensitivity is always shown to individual pupils' and family needs.

The AIO meets regularly with the Headteacher to review official registers and identify children who are often late and take further action where necessary.

If no improvement is seen during the following half term, the parent may be asked to come in and meet with representatives of the School's Governing Body.

Late minutes throughout the term add up and, where a child is late after the registers close, this also brings down their overall percentage attendance.

Absence

If a child is going to be absent from school (eg. illness), parents must contact the school office by 9.30am on the first day of absence and confirm the reason. We ask that parents keep in regular contact thereafter until their child returns to school, and certainly where absence extends into another week.

If no contact has been made by 9.30am, the child is marked as “Unauthorised Absence” on the official attendance registers.

If we have not heard from parents and carers by 9.30am to tell us why their child is not coming to school that day, we will attempt to make contact with them. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.

Where there is an absence of more than one week, we would request that parents provide medical evidence where possible, ie. copy of a prescription, doctor’s letter, copy of prescribed medication label etc.

Medical Appointments

We would request that, where possible, routine medical appointments are made outside of the school day. Obviously, we understand that appointments are not always under parents’ control and when an appointment has been booked during the school day, parents should advise us in advance of the appointment (in writing), providing a copy of the appointment letter / appointment card where possible. On the day of the appointment, parents should collect their child from the school office where they will be required to sign them out of school and sign them back in again immediately after the appointment.

If a child has a medical appointment locally, they are expected to come into school **before** and **after** the appointment, eg. if the appointment is at 9.45am, we would expect the child to come into school first and return immediately afterwards. (The Headteacher cannot authorise half day or whole day medical appointments unless they are out of Stevenage, eg. at Great Ormond Street, Cambridge etc).

Emergency Medical Appointments - On the occasions when children need to attend a local emergency appointment with a doctor/dentist, parents should call the school office first thing in the morning to keep the school informed. If we do not hear from you **beforehand**, the absence would be recorded as an “Unauthorised Absence”.

Term-Time Absence

The school actively discourages parents from taking their children out of school during term time. However, if a parent still wishes to do so, a Leave of Absence Request must be completed (available from the school office) and submitted at least 2 weeks in advance of the absence. The absence is then recorded as a period of unauthorised absence on the official attendance registers. Leave of absence during term time is granted only in **exceptional** circumstances at the Headteacher’s discretion.

Fixed Penalty Notices For Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are when:

- A term time holiday has taken place.
- Your child arrives late, after the register has closed (ie. after 9.15pm)
- We have not received notification of absence.
- No evidence is provided, if requested by school (when attendance is an ongoing concern, eg. persistently below 90%, the Senior Leadership Team will meet with you and ask you for medical evidence eg. prescriptions and / or appointment slips).

The Headteacher regularly monitors unauthorised absences. Once a child's attendance record shows 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, the Headteacher is required to send a formal warning letter to the parent. This is known as an FPN1 Letter and advises the parent that they are at risk of being in breach of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007. This letter explains that if the number of unauthorised absence sessions reaches 15 or more in the **current and/or previous term** the Local Authority may issue the parent with a penalty notice. (This applies, even though the previous term may have been in the previous academic year ie. the child may be taking some unauthorised absence during September / October (Autumn Term), but any unauthorised absence already taken during the previous April to July (Summer Term), will also be included.)

At the point the unauthorised absence sessions reaches 15, the Headteacher is required to issue an FPN2 Letter to the parent which advises the parent that they are in breach of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and that they may receive a fine from the Local Authority.

In some cases, Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued to both parents with or without parental responsibility if they are involved in the care of the child.

One session is either 1 morning or 1 afternoon
Two sessions equates to one day
15 sessions equates to 7.5 school days.

A Fixed Penalty Notice means:-

- **A fine of £60.00, if paid within 21 days**
- **A fine of £120.00, if paid within 28 days**

Please Note: Non-payment of fines can lead to prosecution.



APPENDIX A

Lodge Farm Primary School
Mobbsbury Way
Chells
Stevenage
Herts SG2 0HR

Tel: 01438 236600 Fax: 01438 236601
Information Line: 08453 316191

“Learning in mind, community at heart”

email: admin@lodgefarm.herts.sch.uk
www. lodgefarm.herts.sch.uk

Headteacher: Helen Turner
Co-Headteacher: Sue Padfield

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

“Every Lesson Counts”

There is a strong correlation between good attendance and good achievement at school and clearly we want all our children to leave Lodge Farm with the best life chances possible. School is important and whilst we fully appreciate how expensive a holiday can be, we cannot condone holiday during term time.

Children find it very difficult to catch up on the learning they have missed and in the longer term this can have a negative impact on their progress. Also, what message are children being given about the value and importance of going to school if holidays are taken frequently?

May we remind you that if your child’s attendance falls below 85% they are now classed as a “persistent absentee” and their attendance will be monitored by our Attendance Improvement Officer. The Government expectation is for every child to attend school at least 95% of the time.

Please be aware that, in line with the attendance policy, Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued if your child has more than 21 sessions of unauthorised absence over 2 consecutive terms. (Previous good attendance is not taken into account when issuing these Fixed Penalties).

As a parent or carer you should still fill in this form if you want to take your child out of school during term time to go on an annual holiday. Please return this form to the office for our records.

Please be advised that _____ (Name of child) Class _____
will be absent from Lodge Farm School

from _____ to _____

in order to take part in an annual holiday. I understand that this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If there are any exceptional circumstances you feel we should be aware of, please detail below and continue overleaf if necessary. Please be advised that exceptional circumstances will be considered individually and will not automatically mean that your request is authorised.

For office use only

Headteacher’s Signature:

No. of sessions to date	No. of sessions (this occasion)	No of sessions unauthorised	Letter Sent
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