



Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Adopted by LGB of St. Peter's (Wymondham) CE Primary School on:

Headteacher: Mrs Hopkins

Chair of Governors: Mrs Johnson

Approved by Directors: February 2019

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Our Vision | 3 |
| Our Values | 3 |
| Policy Application and Purpose | 3 |
| Registration | 5 |
| Absences | 5 |
| Punctuality | 7 |
| Changing Schools | 7 |
| Promoting Good Attendance | 7 |
| Confidentiality and Quality Assurance | 7 |
| Policy Control | 8 |

Our vision

The Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT) is a family of schools serving both Church and community where diversity is celebrated and respect and dignity are paramount. Our aspirations are high for the children we serve and we use our combined strengths in wisdom and fellowship to support them and each other to be successful.

Our strong sense of community & collaboration ensures happiness, fulfilment and well-being are key, so that children know they are loved by God and in turn grow to love learning, to love life and to love others. Our ambition is for all our staff, children and schools to flourish, living life in all its fullness.

Our values and aims

The Core Principles that underpin all our policies and defines what DLAT aims to be are as follows:

- A professional community of collaborative learners working in trust & fellowship for personal growth and wisdom.
- A family of happy, successful schools where well-being is highly valued and children are inspired to live life to its full.
- Ambitious for ALL children to achieve their true potential with an inclusive philosophy and a clear commitment to the most disadvantaged communities we serve.
- Committed to ensuring resources are used efficiently and effectively to provide best value for children's learning.
- A champion for the Church of England's vision for education, supporting local Diocesan aims.

Policy Application and purpose

This policy has been created in consultation with all Headteachers and with the advice of an attendance consultant. It applies to all DLAT schools and sets out a clear framework for schools to manage the attendance of children.

The Trust promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for children. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to under achieve and/ or become involved in anti-social behaviour (Department for Education)

DLAT schools are committed to:

- Excellent attendance of our pupils
- Excellent punctuality of pupils
- Raising levels of achievement
- Maximising opportunities for children in school
- Working in partnership with parents to maintain high expectations of attendance and timekeeping.

The school's responsibilities include:

- Advising the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend regularly or who has absences recorded as unauthorised.
- Taking a register twice each day at 8.50am and 1.05pm.
- Coding the reasons for absence in accordance with a prescribed list (Codes include circumstances including: Illness, medical, education off site, authorised or unauthorised).
- Complying with statutory registration and deletion procedures.
- Adopting a rigorous approach in monitoring attendance so it is at least similar to national and not below for ALL pupils.
- Working with parents to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Maintaining good communication with parents to ensure attendance information is regularly shared.
- Maintaining good communication with the Trust about attendance figures.
- Ensuring the LGB regularly monitors how the school is improving attendance.

Authorised absence is defined as, when the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or exceptionally where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Unauthorised absence is defined as, when a pupil is away from school, or when a **pupil is late after the register has closed** for the session, without permission from an authorised person.

Persistent absence is defined as absence below 90%. **Parents whose children are persistently absent risk prosecution if the absences are recorded as unauthorised.** It is concerning to us if a child's attendance is below 95%, the attendance lead in school will therefore monitor all attendance below 95%.

| % in attendance | Number of days missed | Status |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 100% attendance | 0 days missed | Excellent |
| 96% attendance | 8 days missed <i>or</i> 1 week and 3 days missed | Satisfactory |
| 91-95% attendance | | Cause for Concern |
| 90% attendance | 19 days missed <i>or</i> 3 weeks and 4 days missed | Unacceptable |

Registration (adapted to be specific to school times)

It is DLAT policy that registration should close **10 minutes after the start of a session.**

The school doors open at 8.45 am to provide adequate time for children to be ready for the start of the school day at 8.50am.

Registers close at 9.00 am. Children arriving after the register has been taken, but before 9.10 am will be registered as late.

Arrivals after 9.10 am are registered as unauthorised absence.

Children who arrive late due to an unavoidable medical or dental appointment will have their absence authorised provided that they produce evidence to support this.

Absences

School needs to be informed about the reason for a child's absence. Parents and carers should contact the school office by phone or in person on the first day a child is absent before 9.00 am. Parents should continue to keep the school informed about an absence every other day. If a child has not been marked present in the register and school has not been notified about a child's absence, the office will contact parents as soon as possible. If we are not able to contact parents or are concerned regarding attendance we will call outside agencies for support, for example the police could be asked to conduct a 'safe and well' check.

Parents/Carers do not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/carers. (Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence; the school will record such absence as unauthorised).

School will only authorise absence on request in exceptional circumstances for:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical and dental appointments
- Visits to other schools
- Religious holidays
- To attend weddings or funerals of close family members (up to 2 days can be authorised including a day to travel and a day to attend service).

Evidence will be required to authorise any absence for children who are persistently absent or at risk of being persistently absent.

Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of the school day. When this is not possible it is expected that children will only miss part of the school day

Unauthorised absence includes (but is not limited to)

- Staying at home because a parent or other child is unwell
- Minor medical issues such as head lice
- Oversleeping
- Visiting family and friends
- Celebrating a birthday
- Shopping

Request for Leave of absence

Government guidelines prevent Headteachers from granting leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term time does not fall into the category of 'exceptional circumstance'. An example of an exceptional circumstance could be a family with a parent in HM forces, who is restricted to taking leave at a given time.

We recognise that there will be times when a child requires short periods of exceptional leave during term-time. In these circumstances parents/carers are asked to complete the 'Exceptional Leave Form' to request the absence. These requests will be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis. In the case of family emergency or bereavement, this can be done verbally. Forms are available from the school office.

The Headteacher will consider whether the request of leave could be considered to fall under the heading of 'Exceptional Circumstances'. If the request is not being made as a result of exceptional circumstances or the family have already taken the absence without seeking the approval of the Headteacher, the Headteacher must notify the parents, in writing, of their decision to refuse to grant permission for leave. The leave will be coded as unauthorised and parents will be informed that this refusal places the parent/s at risk of being issued with Penalty Notice/s. Penalty notices are issued per parent for each child as per Leicestershire County Council's policy/Code of Conduct. Parents failing to pay £60 within 21 days/£120 within 28 days will face prosecution under section 444 Education Act 1996.

No exceptional leave requests will be granted when the end of key stage tests and assessments or the phonics screen is taking place.

Staff will not be required to set work for children who are absent by parental request.

Punctuality

Being punctual for school enables children to feel prepared for learning at the start of the school day and is essential to ensure that children achieve their full educational potential. Children who are late for school will miss key information.

Being late after register closes will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be dealt with accordingly.

Changing Schools

Parents should inform the school as soon as possible that their child will be moving school. It is important that parents act quickly in securing a new school place for their child so that valuable learning time is not lost in the transition between schools. A child will stay on our school roll until notification has been received by another school that the child has enrolled and attended the first day. Children who do not attend school and for whom no notification of a new school place is received will be reported to the Local Authority as a child missing education.

Promoting good attendance

Each school promotes good attendance as works for them but may include for example:

- Implementing the whole school policy
- Discussing attendance when required at parent's evenings
- Making contact with parents if we have initial concerns
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality and dealing with it promptly.
- Awarding certificates for excellent attendance termly.
- Keeping governors aware of attendance matters.
- Send out annually a reminder letter and guidelines about requesting holiday in term time.

Confidentiality & Quality Assurance

We will comply with our data protection requirements and responsibilities in ensuring confidentiality of any personal data is maintained in line with policies. Schools will be monitored by the Trust in line with this policy to ensure they maintain high standards of developing and supporting parents to improve attendance and to ensure no specific group has poor attendance. The LGB will also monitor the way school is managing attendance in line with this policy.

Policy Review

The DLAT Learning Trust reserves the right to review this policy to ensure it remains aligned to our vision and values at any point or if legislation is changed.

Policy Control - Controlled Document

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