

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2021-24

At the Leys Primary and Nursery School we expect children to attend school every day. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life and research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance, punctuality and educational progress and attainment. Excellent attendance and punctuality are therefore important if children are to benefit from everything school has to offer and is vital for children to develop important life skills.

Parents/carers and the school staff are partners in making this a success and this partnership is very important to the school. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that children arrive at school on time and return home safely.

The school register is a legal document.

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Promote school aims: to accelerate learning, to promote pupil wellbeing and to raise attainment.
- Support pupils' and their parents/carers to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to accelerate learning.
- Enable pupils to make good and consistent progress throughout the school.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school **every** day.
- Be in school by 8.50 a.m.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence or in advance, if known.
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or school Attendance Officer any problems that may affect their school attendance.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect that the school will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality. Monitor individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend, where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- If parents and carers fail to respond to our texts and phone calls, we will contact any other contacts provided for the child. If we have cause for concern we may contact the police for a welfare check, especially if they walk to school by themselves.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the Headteacher can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body will be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Class teachers will promote and encourage good attendance on an ongoing basis.
- Communicate with pupils and parents on a regular basis e.g. surveys, to ensure pupils' attendance is high due to the enjoyment of all aspects of the curriculum.
- Regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all children.

Meet regularly with parents and carers of pupils' where there are concerns with either attendance and punctuality; setting targets, writing support plans, and offering support; involving other professionals if relevant.

- Refer and review irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the HCC team.
- Regular contact with the HCC Attendance Improvement Officer to monitor, support and set challenging targets for school attendance and punctuality.
- Notify the Local Authority (See Appendix) after 15 consecutive days sickness or after 10 days unexplained absence.

Parents will receive termly information of their child's current attendance, they also receive termly Attendance Newsletter to help them understand the importance of Attendance and Punctuality. For targeted focus families, they receive weekly text messages to inform them of hours/ minutes of school missed due to attendance and / or punctuality.

Absence

Parents will be informed of pupil absence each term. Everyday counts as two sessions.

When to Report Absence to the School

- All absences must be reported on a daily basis.

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

In all cases of absence the parents/carers should:

1. Only keep your child away from school if really necessary (the school will always call and send home an unwell child).
2. Telephone the school on 01438 314148 or text at the earliest opportunity to let them know why your child is going to be absent. Please try and phone by 9.15 am at the very latest. The office has an answer machine and messages can be left.
3. Please call daily and keep the school informed if more than one day's absence is necessary.
 - If medical appointments are absolutely necessary, please ensure your child attends school both before and after appointment, confirmation of appointment (letter or text) will be needed for authorisation.
 - If your child fails to register or is absent and we have not received notification by 9.15am a call will be made to you. This only applies on the first day of absence. It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to call the school each day their child is off school and explain the reason why.
 - Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. The reason for each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.
 - **Authorised Absence:** an absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. The Head teacher authorises the absence.

Examples of authorised absences:

- ∅ genuine illness of the pupil;
- ∅ hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil;
- ∅ major religious observances (one day for each observance)
- ∅ visits to prospective new schools;
- ∅ external exams or educational assessments;
- ∅ immediate family bereavement.

- **Unauthorised Absence:** an absence is classified as unauthorised when the school does not consider the explanation as reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given by the Head teacher.

Examples of unauthorised absences:

- ∅ holidays during term time;
- ∅ travelling to a special event;

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

- ∅ shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park /a birthday treat;
- ∅ being tired or oversleeping due to a late night;
- ∅ looking after other children/other family members/parent illness;
- ∅ appointments for other family members.

Term time Holidays

- Term time holidays are unauthorised.
- All families intending to take pupils out for a holiday need to make an appointment to meet the headteacher through the school office.
- Term time holidays will be tracked for each family.
- Extended periods of absence will only be authorised in **exceptional** circumstances

Persistent Absence

If a pupil has 10% + absence then they become a persistent absentee. As a result, absence will be carefully tracked daily.

Medical evidence will be asked to explain absence.

Parents will be expected to have regular meetings at school to review absence.

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:	
100%	Excellent!
96% +	Expected attendance -Well done ! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. Your child's attendance is at, or above, the expected target.
93% - 95%	Below expected - Strive to build on this. Your child's attendance is below expected and will be monitored. A letter may be sent to you to monitor your child's attendance.
86% - 92%	Well below expected attendance - Absence is now significantly affecting your child's attainment and progress. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. The school will meet with you to review the particular context and to plan for improved attendance and/or punctuality.

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

85% & below	Unacceptable - Absence is seriously affecting attainment and progress and disrupting your child's development. Your child's attendance is now a major concern. It is probable that a referral to the HCC Attendance team is likely to be made and a meeting will be convened at school to put in place strategies to improve attendance rapidly. Legal proceedings may follow.
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All issues which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties are to be promptly investigated by the class teacher, and referred to the Head teacher if necessary. Where pupils are admitted in-year, information about attendance will be sought from the previous school, and any concerns addressed with parents before admission.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

There may be an occasion when a decision needs to be overturned and an authorised/unauthorised absence is changed. This will only happen after discussion between the Head Teacher and either the school Attendance Officer or the HCC Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

Rewards

- The main benefit from regular and punctual attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.
- As a school, we acknowledge good attendance through a variety of rewards:

We celebrate improved attendance regularly on Facebook, termly parties of target pupils, weekly treats for target year groups and weekly individualised incentives for target pupils.

Presentations in weekly assemblies and reported in the newsletter.

Ø weekly certificate and HEDDY mascot (Here Every Day) presented for class with best attendance;

Ø weekly OTIS mascot presented for class with best punctuality;

Ø individual Annual 100% Attendance Awards;

Ø individual Termly 100% Attendance Awards;

Ø occasional class treat for exceptional attendance and /

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

or punctuality.

- Members of staff will be allocated to support pupils where there are issues with their attendance. Each child will have an individual attendance plan which will be monitored daily. Pupils who fall below expected attendance may have a sticker chart to encourage improvement, and reward for improved attendance and/or timekeeping.

Punctuality

It is paramount that all children arrive at school on time.

- Pupils may come into school from 8.35 a.m. and the doors will open at 8.45 a.m.

Junior pupils may go straight to class.

Parents and carers must accompany Infant pupils to the classroom door.

- Registration starts at 8.50am and closes promptly at 8.55am. If any pupil arrives after this time, they must enter via the school office where they will be signed in. The pupil will receive a 'late' sticker' to let the teacher know they have been signed in. These pupils will be recorded as 'late' on the class register.
- Any pupil who arrives after 9.10 a.m. will receive an unauthorised absence for the morning, unless in exceptional circumstances their absence is authorised by the Headteacher.
- A parent/carer should notify the class teacher or the school office if their child is going to arrive late. Staff will ask for a reason for lateness, as the office keep a "Late Register" to monitor how many times a child is late. The Head teacher monitors this weekly.

Regular meetings are held to discuss both punctuality and absence across the school - parents/carers are sent letters/contacted by a member of the office staff/head teacher to discuss related issues.

Members of staff will be allocated to support pupils where there are issues with either attendance and/or punctuality. Each child will have an individual attendance plan and punctuality will be monitored daily.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

During school hours, the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents/carers are requested to inform the school of the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, and the expected return time. PLEASE PROVIDE EVIDENCE AS APPROPRIATE.

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

- Where a child is being collected from the school, parents/carers are to report to the school office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- Children must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission, their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police. The health and safety of pupils are given the highest priority.

The Law

By law, parents and carers must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) receive a suitable, full-time education (Education Act, 1996). As a parent/carer, you may be committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice, prosecution or application for an Education Supervision.

Penalty Notices

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible, and no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. A form (Application for a Leave of Absence during Term Time) will need to be collected from the office and completed.

The guidance states that if a parent/carer takes their child out of school e.g. on holiday or other unauthorised leave of absence, without the authority of the Head teacher, each parent/carer may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent.

Under existing legislation, each parent/carer commits an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as 'unauthorised'. Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

With the exception of unauthorised 'leave of absence' taken in term time, parents/carers will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

The amount payable on the issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 (issued to each parent/carer, for each child) if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices will increase to £120 after 21 days but within 28 days. After 28 days, the LA may prosecute under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

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The Leys Primary and Nursery School

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Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils) or Covid 19 related	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

Appendix 2 Local Authority Checklist



Local Authority Attendance Team Checklist for Schools to Support Referral or Penalty Notice Application

Evidence will be required that the following measures have been implemented (not all will be required/appropriate) during Covid 19 and academic year 2020 to 2021.

Recommendations	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call to parent/pupil to discuss concerns • Email to parent/pupil to discuss concerns • Text if school has a mobile • Letter to parent/carer raising concerns, making clear expectations, re-iterate the safety measures school have in place, offering a meeting date and time or requesting parents contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss the way forward 	<p>If sending email select delivery and read receipt which is advised to show proof of delivery</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visit or Doorstep visit - this must take place if safeguarding concerns for pupil 	<p>If no answer put a prepared letter through letter box asking parent to contact the school urgently</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding concerns – school must follow their safeguarding processes 	<p>Speak to Consultation Hub or refer to MASH or ring 101 for Police Welfare Check if pupil believed to be at risk of harm</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting in school/tour of school – if parent does not agree to this then try next step • Virtual tour or twilight visit to demonstrate safety measures for Covid 19 and discuss concerns – if parent does not agree to this then you could send photos home showing how the classroom and general areas of the school are set up and follow up in writing to parent through letter or email • Consider offering meeting in playground? • Where appropriate to consider direct contact (virtual) with pupil to acknowledge and support anxieties 	<p>Parent and pupil have opportunity to demonstrate current safety measures and alleviate parental/pupil anxiety Build confidence in parent and pupil about expectations and processes Parent and pupil have opportunity to meet new teacher and see classroom School has opportunity to explore with pupil any worries/anxieties and develop plans</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider short term part-time timetable – see guidance on the Grid as a way to reintegrate https://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml • Meet and greet in the mornings etc • Buddy, mentor, friendly member of school staff to greet pupil to reassure and settle • Learning support 1 to 1 • Desensitising programme as part of part-time timetable • Consider other reasonable adjustments 	<p>Provides a safe and gradual plan to work towards reintegration. Discuss with Attendance Team</p>

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the pupil SEN? • Is an EHCP review needed? • Consider what professionals are already involved and seek advice • Do you have concerns related to ASD/ADHD/SEMH? • School could refer to or discuss with their local DSPL to see if additional support is available • Look on Local Offer website for local support https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/Local-Offer/TheHertfordshire-Local-Offer.aspx 	<p>Contact SEN Officer to inform, discuss and arrange EHCP review. Contact SENDSAS (CAT Team) contact line 01442 453920 Contact EP Contact Line 01992 588574 Additional advice/support can be provided through DSPLs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If child or young person is presenting with anxiety • Use the Emotionally Based School Avoidance guidance. An Executive Summary was sent to all schools in week commencing 1.3.21 and the full document can be requested via sarah.corlett@hertfordshire.gov.uk 	<p>Contact Schools Link EP Contact EP Contact Line 01992 588574 Executive Summary attached</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical needs • Follow up with GP and possible referral for anxiety - CAMHS/ Step 2/Counselling • Discuss with school health • School could provide Online support if appropriate 	<p>https://www.hct.nhs.uk/covid19/schools-and-families-advice-linesfal/ https://www.kooth.com/</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School could refer to or discuss with their local DSPL to see if additional support is available • Discussion with ESMA https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/education-support/get-help-to-access-learning/education-support-for-medical-absence.aspx 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to Family Support Workers Consider • Families First Portal https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/familiesfirst/families-first.aspx 	<p>Additional support and advice can be provided</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPN applications will not be accepted until after the Easter break. We will expect that a conversation takes place between school SLT and the LA Attendance Team so that relevant intelligence can be shared, and all possible avenues of support explored prior to any application being submitted. • Any PN application received by a school without a conversation with the LA Attendance Team will not be processed. We will expect a full chronology showing that schools have attempted to address the absence during the period illustrated within the application. 	<p>FPN application will comply with Local Authority Expectations and Code of Conduct FPN application will demonstrate support provided to parents</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the 10-day unexplained absence form if appropriate and send to the Local Authority Attendance Team https://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml 	<p>Local Authority Attendance Team can assess and provide advice and guidance if appropriate</p>

The Leys Primary and Nursery School

<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Contact Attendance Duty through telephone or email to discuss concerns, seek advice and guidance	Local Authority Attendance Team can assess and provide advice and guidance School can be reassured that they have considered all options of support for pupil
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Some helpful websites:

www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown>

www.healthforteens.co.uk <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-schoolanxiety-and-refusal/>