

Lockwood Primary School

Attendance Policy

Approved by Governing Body
Approved by HT

Date: March 2022
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Review Date: March 2023

Values

Our policy recognises that high levels of school attendance are significant to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Missing out on lessons leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind and achieving less in both primary and secondary school. The staff and governors of Lockwood Primary School are committed to working with families to address any problems that impede full attendance promptly. Attendance is given a high priority at Lockwood.

The overall aim of the attendance policy is to:

- Keep children safe and ensure their welfare needs are met in accordance with safeguarding practice.
- Provide a stable environment in which our children can learn.
- Support parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children who are of compulsory school age attend school regularly
- To raise standards and ensure each child reaches their full potential.
- Maximise educational opportunities for all our pupils, ensuring there is a consistent and fair approach with equal opportunities for all.
- Encourage good habits of school attendance.

We do this by:

- Applying a robust attendance process.
- Notifying parents at the earliest opportunity where attendance is below expected national standards.
- Ensuring pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school on time.
- Working with parents to reduce illness and medical absence
- Working in collaboration with other agencies including our Education Welfare Officer
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Identifying vulnerable children who may have a specific area of need to enable them to attend school
- Analysis of attendance data to highlight areas of concern, particularly amongst vulnerable groups, including the identification and tracking of persistent absence pupils
- Highlighting the importance of attendance with pupils through achievement and rewards.

The legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, academies, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents, are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996, sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Further advice and guidance provided by the DfE on specific aspects of attendance is referenced in the policy.

Lockwood Primary School recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff who during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with the pupils and their families, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupil. This includes effective joint working practice with external agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise and ensuring attendance practice and record keeping reflects this responsibility.

As with all aspects of a child's life, it is the parents/carers who have the pivotal role in ensuring their child's best interests are taken into consideration at all times. The law in relation to the regular attendance of a child at school is strict in the application of this responsibility. At Lockwood Primary School we want to support our parents in carrying out this responsibility but at the same time we will tender challenges where a child's level of attendance falls behind expectations. To this end, the policy is robust in its early identification of attendance concerns and structured to ensure the appropriate level of support is put in place.

Lockwood Primary School recognises that a child's learning journey starts at the very beginning of their Early Years education, this being an important time for parents to embed good habits of attendance with their child, which will follow them through their school life. The parent is expected to have good routines in place to ensure their child is prepared for school each day and is ready to learn by attending regularly and being in school on time. Once established, we believe the child will easily become accustomed to all school routines and will grow through their education to become an independent learner.

We also recognise that at times difficulties may arise within a family, which can impact upon a child's learning and school attendance. In such cases, it is important for a pupil or parent to speak to a person within their school, who in confidence, will listen and discuss the best way forward. We believe in working closely with the pupils and parents to ensure a child's education is not interrupted and they can continue to attend school regularly.

The policy is relevant to every child on roll at an academy within Lockwood Primary School, between the ages of 3 and 11 years old.

Context of the school attendance measures

A parent is responsible for ensuring their child being of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. This is a legal requirement. A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

Rights and Responsibilities

Promoting good attendance at Lockwood Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - parents, children, the school staff and governing body. Lockwood Primary School expects:

Head teacher

- To be responsible for managing and implementing this policy.
- To deal with requests for term time leave of absence.
- To analyse attendance data and communicate with parents.
- To liaise with external agencies.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance are used.
- To report attendance rates to the Local Management Board and the Nicholas Postgate Board.

School Office Staff

- To record absences notified by telephone.
- To make first day telephone calls to parents. Inform parents of school procedures when they have failed to inform the school of their child's absence.
- To monitor weekly attendance for each class.
- To inform the Head teacher of any concerns relating to attendance or punctuality.
- To produce data for the Head teacher to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and update class registers and SIMS.
- Ensure staff are following registration procedures.

Staff

- Complete the attendance register at the agreed times.
- To remind parents about attendance on termly curriculum newsletters.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment which encourages good attendance.
- Establish good relationships with parents.
- Liaise with external agencies where necessary.
- Work with families where attendance is a concern.
- Inform the Head teacher of any concerns regarding a child's wellbeing.
- To give feedback to parents about attendance during Structured Conversations.

Parents

- By laws are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Children should be kept at home only if they have a serious illness or injury. If a child has a minor illness. They can be brought in and school will contact parents should they not get any better and are not fit enough to remain in school.
- Parents are expected to work in partnership with school to encourage high attendance.
- Parents should inform the school on each day of absence for their child.
- Try and ensure that appointments and holidays are taken out of school time.

Children

- Attend school regularly and understand the need for doing so.
- Be prompt in their arrival and be prepared for the school day.
- Inform a teacher if there are any problems that might prevent them from attending school.

Attendance Registers

The law requires all schools to have an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the register. The attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

On each occasion a record is made as to whether a pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the electronic register which is used to download data to the School Census.

All attendance information is kept in accordance with confidentiality and data protection practice. The main attendance register is compiled electronically using the School Information Management System (SIMS).

School Day

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day.

Afternoon registration will take place immediately after lunch.

The timings for the school day are: 8:40am to 3.00pm.

If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes. In such cases, to ensure effective safeguarding practice is in place, it is important that the pupil's details are recorded in school as being signed out by a member of staff along with a signature from the appropriate adult collecting the child is also required. Accordingly, where the pupil returns to the school, they should be signed back in. Reasons for signing a child out of school, in every case must be confirmed by the parent. Evidence will be requested to support the reason.

Children sent home ill must be recorded in the same way. A member of the SLT must make the decision to send a child home.

Lateness

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code U: Late arrival after the register has closed.

Registers close 30 minutes from the beginning of registration.

Afternoon registration closes after the register is taken.

Regular school attendance is determined between the hours prescribed by the school. As part of a parent's responsibility to ensuring their child attends regularly at school, it is important for parents to ensure their child is arriving on time to school. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children miss the start of lessons and disrupt teaching. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Once the school gates are closed, the pupil will be required to sign in at the school office, where the reason for lateness will be recorded.

If a child is regularly late, a 'Late Letter' is sent. Punctuality is then expected to improve

Attendance and Absence Codes

A list of all the codes and their meanings are contained in the Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006. The codes enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps the school, local authority and Ofsted to gain a greater understanding of the level and the reasons for pupil absence.

Absence from school is a safeguarding factor and is monitored to identify pupils who may be vulnerable for welfare reasons or identified as not making progress in their learning.

Monitoring Attendance

Lockwood Primary School expects all pupils, at any one time throughout the school year, to be attaining at least 96% attendance. This equates to at 5 days (10 sessions am and pm) absence within the school year. This requirement is in accordance with Ofsted guidance which rates attendance as follows:

100%-99%ATTENDANCE	OUTSTANDING
98%-96% ATTENDANCE	GOOD
95%-93%ATTENDANCE	SATISFACTORY
93%-90%ATTENDANCE	INADEQUATE
89%-86%	ATTENDANCE CAUSE FOR CONCERN
85%ATTENDANCE AND BELOW	SERIOUS CONCERN

Where there is a continued decline in attendance, we will consider moving to formal attendance processes. In such cases, the parent will be invited to attend an Attendance Case Conference, the purpose of which is to formulate a plan to work together to improve attendance. A review conference will be held within 4 to 6 weeks.

The attendance process is subject to fast tracking and where appropriate, formal attendance processes will be initiated without recourse to the staged approach. The school adopts a robust attendance process which is a staged approach offering guidance correlating to the pupil's overall attendance to determine the level of intervention deemed necessary.

The monitoring of attendance for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), follows this process but without recourse to the staged approach.

Attendance Letter 1

The school has a duty through the attendance process to advise the parent in writing, as early as possible, where their child's attendance has fallen below expectations. To comply with legal requirements, each parent is notified in writing separately. This will normally be sent out when attendance is 95%

Attendance Letter 2

Where there are continuing concerns and decline in attendance, the second attendance letter highlights the need for the parent to provide proof of medical/illness absence to be provided to enable the school to be satisfied as to the authenticity of the absence. In such cases, the school will accept a prescription notice, medical letter, appointment card, or similar. The school does not require the parent to provide a GP sick note, and do not expect the parent to make an additional payment, subject to prescription

charges, to satisfy this requirement. This will normally be sent out when attendance is 91%

Attendance Letter 3

This letter notifies parents that a referral has been made to the IEWO (Independent Educational Welfare Officer).

Formal Attendance Process/Legal Intervention

As a child's regular attendance at school is a legal requirement, subject to section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the school has to consider if legal intervention is deemed necessary. This requires a referral to the local authority who has the delegated authority to arrange the issue of a summons to the parent of a child who is not attending school regularly where there is evidence to support the commission of the offence. Referrals will be made at 90%

Persistent Absence

A pupil who has 10% or more absence is classified for statistical purposes as being a 'persistent absentee'. This is measured in sessions missed from school and could be owing to either authorised or unauthorised absence. These are pupils which the school considers to be particularly vulnerable and, in most cases, will be subject to an Attendance Plan, to ensure they are supported in attending school regularly.

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 carer. Only the Head teacher can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

Absence can be authorised if:

- the child is ill
- the child had to attend hospital
- for an exceptional special circumstance such as a family bereavement, to attend a family wedding or to take an examination.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is recorded where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or where a reason has not been given.

Parents/carers are expected to notify the school of their child's absence on the first day of the absence and every day thereafter. All unexplained and unexpected absences will be followed up in a timely manner, preferably within 3 days of absence. Every effort will be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. A letter (Unexplained Absence Letter) will be sent to parents requesting the absence be explained. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended, with the appropriate code. The school has a responsibility to follow up all unexplained

and unexpected absence. The school may also ask the Education Welfare Officer to make an unplanned home visit if needed to check on pupils unexplained absences.

Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Parents/carers are advised to notify the academy as soon as possible when a child is to be absent for illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, we will advise parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. The school can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied as to the authenticity of the illness and will advise parents/carers in writing of their intention to do this. In such cases, a prescription notice, medical letter, appointment card, or similar, will suffice. The school does not expect parent/carers to request medical certificates from the GP, which can incur a charge.

The school will ensure that pupils at school with medical conditions are supported to enable them to have full access to their education. In such cases an individual healthcare plan may be initiated, in consultation with the parent and pupil and relevant healthcare professional. The plan should consider the management of absence from school. It is unacceptable practice to penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition, eg. hospital appointments.

(Supporting children at school with medical conditions, December 2015)

Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are therefore encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment, returning to school immediately after the appointment. It is important to ensure effective safeguarding practice is in place. A pupil arriving at school after being at a medical appointment, who has not been marked present for that session, must be signed into the school at the office. Evidence of the medical appointment will need to be produced, otherwise a child arriving into school will be recorded as late, which may be an unauthorised lateness, depending on the time of arrival into school. The school seeks to work flexibly with parents/carers in managing medical absence, so as not to penalise children for their attendance record if their absences are related to their medical condition, eg. hospital appointments. (Supporting children at school with medical conditions, December 2015)

Children Missing from Education

A pupil who is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days is regarded as a 'child missing from education'. In such cases, a referral will be made to the local authority. Before doing so, the school will have made all necessary enquiries to trace the pupil, through any additional contact numbers. This is regarded as a major safeguarding concern and may involve contact being made with the Police or the local authority children's services. It is important that all absences are notified to the school on each day of absence and a change to contact information is updated. (Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016)

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The parent/carer who has responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school, should make an application to the Head Teacher for any leave of absence in term time. Using the appropriate application form, the request should be made providing at least one month's notice. A separate application is required to be completed for each child. Leave of absence in term time is not a parental right.

The application form is downloadable from the website and is available from the school office.

The Head Teacher cannot grant leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be determined by the Head Teacher.

Term time leave of absence will not be authorised at the following critical times in any instance:

- At any time in September
- For any pupil whose absence was below 97% in the previous 12 months
- At any time during formal external examinations (Y1 Phonics test June, Y2, Y6 SATS May)
- In July when children are beginning their transition journey
- If a holiday warning letter or penalty notice has been issued in the previous 12 months

Application forms will be returned to parents within 10 school days of the application being received.

Where the decision is made not to grant leave of absence in term time and the leave is taken without prior approval, or without application, the matter will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

They will consider the issue of a penalty notice in the light of prior attendance. In doing so, Lockwood Primary School adheres to the local authority Penalty Notice Code of Practice in making the recommendation for the issue of penalty notices. A penalty notice may be issued to each parent/carer in respect of each child who has been absent.

Further information on the code of practice can be found at [redcar-cleveland.gov.uk\Attendance & Welfare Service](http://redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/Attendance%20&%20Welfare%20Service).

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 to be paid within 28 days. Payment is made to the local authority. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

To enhance safeguarding practice, the school requires an application for any leave of absence in term time to be completed (with the exception of medical absences). This includes where a child is participating in a sporting activity, performance, or where the absence is for religious observance. Evidence will be requested to support an application.

Alternative Provision

The school is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, the school will have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider, to provide attendance information. This should be provided daily.. All unexplained and unexpected absences are to be followed up in a timely manner. Pupils may be present at an off-site activity which has been approved by the school. The appropriate code (B) is used in such cases and in using this code the school is certifying the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard children. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing schoolwork. A pupil may be dual registered at more than one school. Where this is the case, the appropriate code (D) is used to indicate the pupil was not expected to attend the session as they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school.

Lockwood Primary School has a range of incentives for encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. These include a weekly class trophy and responsibility for the school rabbits, termly certificates and end of year rewards. It is important that all pupils are given the opportunity to contribute to this success by attending school regularly.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

