

LANGTOFT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Article 28 (Right to education): Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free...

Article 29 (Goals of education): Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

1. Introduction

1.1 Maximum attendance at school provides pupils with the greatest opportunity to learn and develop the skills needed to meet the challenges of life. To this end, Langtoft Primary School is proactive in promoting high levels of attendance for all pupils. It will act upon problems it identifies as barriers to pupils attending school. It will praise and reward pupils whose attendance is excellent.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 At Langtoft Primary School;

- high expectation is placed on pupils attending school
- it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/carers (with Parental Responsibility) to ensure attendance at school as required by law
- absences are authorised only when it is deemed that there is no alternative
- a request for a leave of absence will be granted in exceptional circumstances only
- in addition to information shared during Parent Consultation appointments, an annual report to parents will state the number of sessions – authorised and unauthorised – that a child has been absent from school
- parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% at any measured point, for example, at the end of a term, will be notified in writing. At this point, support for the family will be offered
- pupils and their parents/carers may need support by the school at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities. The school will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to provide support

3. Expectations

3.1 The school expects pupils to;

- attend school every day unless they are ill
- arrive on time
- tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that prevents them from attending school

3.2 The school expects parents/carers to;

- ensure their children attend school every day and punctually
- ensure that they contact the school as soon as practical whenever their child is unable to attend, giving details of the reason for the absence and the expected length of time the child will be away
- ensure that their children arrive well prepared for the school day
- contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school

- to avoid, wherever possible, taking family holidays in term-time
- accept an invitation to join an Attendance Group to work with leaders and governors to construct an Attendance Support Plan to increase the attendance of children who are persistent absentees.

3.3 Parents/carers should expect the school to;

- carry out regular and accurate recording of attendance
- write to them to inform them when their child's attendance falls below 90%
- make early contact when a pupil fails to attend school without prior notification
- take immediate and confidential action on any problem notified

3.4 The Governing Body expects;

- the Headteacher to report regularly on attendance
- the Headteacher to set challenging yet realistic targets for attendance
- the Headteacher to authorise a leave of absence in line with this policy
- all staff to value and promote the importance of high attendance

4. Encouraging attendance through good practice and rewards

4.1 Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- accurate completion of the registers within 30 minutes (maximum) of the start of a morning and afternoon session
- presenting stickers to children who have 100% attendance at the end of terms i.e. three times a year
- presenting certificates for 100% attendance at the end of each school year
- identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3 by sharing relevant information with the destination school
- establishing a mechanism for working with those parents/carers who express a concern that their child is experiencing difficulty in attending school
- use of year group, class, identified groups (for example, pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)) and pupil level attendance data which enables analysis and a timely response by the school

5. Registration

5.1 An attendance register must be kept at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. The register must show whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, or absent (distinguished as either authorised or unauthorised). Registers are returned to the school office by 0905 and 1305 respectively.

5.2 A record of the number of pupils present during registration will be kept on a laminated sheet positioned next to the classroom's fire exit. This is to be taken outside on evacuation and raised only when a head count has been carried out.

5.3 Registers must be kept in black ink. Authorised absences should be entered in green with the correct symbol for categorising the absence. Where a pupil arrives after registration has closed, they should be marked as 'late'.

5.4 Attendance registers and bound copies of electronic registration print outs must be kept for a minimum of three years from the date that the last entries were made.

6. Responding to non-attendance

6.1 When a pupil does not attend, the school responds

- if a written note or telephone call is not received from parents/carers, a School Administrator will contact the family on the first day of absence by telephone
- where there is no response and after three days of unexplained absence, the Headteacher and another member of staff may visit the family home
- where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the Attendance and Inclusion Team at Lincolnshire County Council and further action planned

7. Authorising absences

- 7.1 Only the Headteacher has the authority to authorise an absence. An **authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.
- 7.2 The following may be reasons for authorising absences; illness, family bereavement, medical and dental appointments, religious observance, fixed term exclusion and permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.
- 7.3 All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.
- 7.4 **Family Holidays**
Parents/carers should not take pupils on holiday during the school term. If a request is not granted and the parent takes the child on holiday, the absence should not be authorised.
- 7.5 Residential visits and educational visits that are longer than the school day and which are organised by the school for its pupils should not be recorded as an absence.
- 7.6 Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a pupil being absent from school. It is for the Headteacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

8. Legal Responsibilities of the School

Section 8 is taken directly from *Every Day Matters: An Attendance Strategy (March 2015 update)*, Lincolnshire County Council.

- 8.1 The law requires that schools take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning and once during the afternoon session.
- 8.2 Schools are required to inform the LA (Inclusion & Attendance Service) if a pupil fails to attend regularly, or has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days, and the absence is treated as unauthorised.
- 8.3 **Legal Powers for the Enforcement of Attendance**
- 8.4 Local Authorities have legal powers to enforce attendance as follows:
- School Attendance Orders (Sections 437-443, Education Act 1996). Where a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, a LA may issue a School Attendance Order. These Orders are not intended for pupils who attend irregularly. Such Orders are served usually in cases where a pupil has not been enrolled in a school, and is not receiving a suitable education otherwise, and in the opinion of the authority it is expedient that the child should attend school.

- Prosecution for Irregular Attendance. (Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1),) If a pupil of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, the parent can be prosecuted. On conviction, the offence carries a fine up to a maximum of £1000.
- Prosecution for Irregular Attendance. (Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) A) The aggravated offence will apply to parents who know that their child is failing to attend school, and take no reasonable action to secure the child's attendance. On conviction this offence carries a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.
- The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 amended section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to provide for the issue of a penalty notice to parents who fail to ensure that their child who is of compulsory school age and registered at a school attends there regularly. These notices can be issued as an alternative to prosecution, the penalty being £60 if paid within twenty one days and £120 if paid within twenty eight days. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in the parent being prosecuted in accordance with Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.
- Parenting Orders. Magistrates may impose a Parenting Order if this would help prevent further pupil absence. The Order would require parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions for up to three months. It may also specify other requirements, for example, for the parent to escort the child to and from school for up to twelve months.
- Education Supervision Orders (Section 37, Children Act 1989 / Section 447 Education Act 1996) - a Local Authority may apply to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) as an alternative to or in addition to prosecution of the parents. An ESO places a child under the supervision of the LA to ensure the child receives a suitable education.
- Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority (LA) in accordance with the requirement of regulation 14 of The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007.

9. Reintegration

9.1 The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires planning. Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on a programme for return and for the management of that programme. Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary

9.2 Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the head teacher. All staff need to be aware that it is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the designated staff member as soon as possible.

10. Removal from the school roll

10.1 Removal from the school roll should take place when;

- a school has been notified that the pupil has registered at another school
- a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parents/carers have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school
- the Headteacher has been notified that the pupil has died
- the pupil has been permanently excluded