

LOSELEY FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if children are to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Loseley Fields Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Aims

This policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- raising awareness of the importance of good attendance;
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Objectives

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

Parents will:

- keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum;
- offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence;

- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness;
- work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance;
- take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special/exceptional circumstances;
- be aware of curriculum requirements and be especial vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS or the numeracy and literacy hour.

The school will:

- positively support school attendance wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount;
- have a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- give a high priority to punctuality and attendance;
- develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention;
- consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act;
- develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance;
- encourage open communication channels between home and school;
- develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees;
- develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO;
- adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LEA and, as well as providing guidance and support through its officers, may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

Recording

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at **8.45am**. At **8.50am** the register is taken to the school office. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late the time and reason for late arrival will be recorded. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register is returned to the class teacher before the start of the afternoon session and the register is again taken at 1.00pm.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone but **must** be followed by a letter on the child's return to school. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education Act which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- the child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause;
- the child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements;
- the child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith;
- the child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, not by the parent, and would normally relate to no more than 10 school days in any 1 year;
- a reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason.

Attendance Codes

A set of standard codes is used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give more meaning to the register and provide statistical data.

Monitoring

The senior management team and the EWO will review the attendance of all the pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as a cause for concern having less than 90% attendance on a more regular basis. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a two week period there appears to be no improvement the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending. If the parent/s do not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral to the EWO will be made. The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide

information to assist the school to manage strategically attendance issues. The EWO will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

Requests for Leave of Absence

If parents wish to request a period of leave they are required to complete an absence permission form. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays except under special / exceptional circumstances.

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. If the penalty notice is not paid within 42 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Education Welfare may issue a penalty notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice. Holidays during SATS, mock and other external examinations will not be authorised. Parents who take their child out of school for four days or more during a period covered by these examinations, without the authority of the headteacher, will be liable to receive a penalty notice provided it can be shown that the parents had been notified in advance of this policy.

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding four months, a warning letter may be sent to the parents/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a penalty notice will be issued to each parent/carer.

Equal Opportunities

At Loseley Fields Primary, all children have the right to achieve to their full potential, regardless of gender, race, culture, language, physical ability, special needs or socio-economic status. Therefore all pupils are given appropriate support and encouragement to attend school regularly.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with SEN, wherever possible, will supported to achieve full attendance at school.

Review

The policy for attendance will be reviewed by the governing body on a regular basis and an action plan if appropriate, linked to the School Development Plan, will be drawn up.

Mr Chris Nourse
Headteacher
October 2008

Adopted by the Governing Body at the meeting dated 26 November 2008

To be reviewed: November 2010