



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Aims

We aim to ensure we have pupils with excellent attendance, arriving on time and ready to learn.

Principles

Everything we do at Loughton Manor First School is to promote our aim: '*Building a lifelong love of learning in a safe and happy school.*'

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. Even for very young children there are positive benefits to be gained from regular attendance. This includes, not only attending, but arriving on time.

We are a friendly and supportive school and always seek to work closely in partnership with parents. Part of the guidance we offer is to promote and develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

We work hard to ensure parents understand their responsibility for making sure their child attends school regularly and on time by publishing the current attendance policy on our website in addition to sending a copy to parents annually. An individual attendance report is provided to each parent at the end of Autumn and Spring Terms and a year end data sheet is part of our Report Package in July. We take a positive, supportive and encouraging approach, providing additional guidance and advice when necessary. It is essential for schools to work with local communities to remove barriers. As such, we work hard to support our families if they have reasons why it is challenging to get their children into school and we work with them to try to find resolutions.

Benefits include:

- The **continuity of learning and development** and access to the whole curriculum. Staff carefully plan every session for each child and want to take every opportunity to help them thrive. Experiences gained in one lesson are often developed further in subsequent sessions.
- The development of **good habits**. It builds in young children the idea that

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getting up and going to school is simply what you do, leading to reliability later on in their education, and in the world of work in adulthood.

- Building **secure social relationships**. These are far easier for children to build and sustain when they regularly attend.
- **Increased confidence and self-esteem**. Children who rarely miss sessions at school and come on time are more likely to feel good about themselves. This is because they know what goes on and what to expect, feel more confident with the adults and the other children, and have more opportunities to be valued and praised for their own special contribution.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Definitions

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Any information about the cause of each absence is always required, if possible in writing, evidence will be required to support some absences.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those that the staff at school do not consider reasonable, or for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence on the part of the parent and include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Truancy from a whole session
- Absences that have never been clearly explained
- Children arriving at school too late to get a mark
- Taking holidays during term-time.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the head of school/headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising and monitoring specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The Attendance Team

The school attendance team is responsible for:

- Checking daily attendance registers and following up any absences
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this on SIMS to the attendance team.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Please advise when they are expected to return, informing them of the reason for absence. This needs to be done before 9am.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Recording attendance

The majority of our pupils are of compulsory school age. This statutory school age starts the term after a child's 5th birthday. However, the principles of good attendance are true for all our pupils, and the monitoring arrangements at Loughton Manor First School apply to all our pupils, including under 5s in the Foundation Stage.

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (See Appendix 1), whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (eg for individual pupils, yeargroups, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence.
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers.

Punctuality

The school day starts at 8:35am and ends at 3:05pm

Pupils must arrive in school between 8:30-8:35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:35am and will be kept open until 9:05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00

Any child arriving between 8:35-9:05am will be given a late mark and after 9:05am will be given an unauthorised mark for the morning session.

This does not apply to our nursery class where the gate is open from 8:30-9am.

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First Day Reporting and Response

On the first day of absence it is the Parent/Carer's responsibility to inform the school. Specific reasons why the child is absent must be supplied along with an expected date of return where possible. Vague descriptions, such as 'unwell' or 'off colour' could be deemed as unacceptable reasons for absence.

The best way to report an absence is via our dedicated email:

absence@loughtonmanor.milton-keynes.sch.uk

Parents/Carers can also call the Office before 9.00am on 01908 241472. A voicemail system is in place to take messages if the call is not answered personally.

As a vigilant and caring school we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a telephone call.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorized unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or the child is on attendance watch. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or the child is on attendance watch, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence ie doctor's note, prescription or appointment confirmation.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make these appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality we:

- have clear procedures – registering children as 'late' and requiring parents/carers to sign them in and leave them at the school's main reception for staff to take through to class. We lock the gates at 8.35am for FS2 and KS1, and 9.00am in Nursery.
- publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers

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- balance any sanctions with positive encouragement
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality
- ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons
- follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

Monitoring Attendance

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality. She is supported in this by the member of the Admin Team responsible for Attendance. The Governing Board receives a termly report on attendance figures. Every month attendance of individuals is printed off, both for that period and for attendance for that year to date. The Headteacher highlights attendance percentages using a R.A.G. system. Any pupils whose attendance is 96% or above are 'green', 90.1%-95.9% are amber and 90% and below are red. The Headteacher will monitor if this is an ongoing issue or if it is as a result of an illness within that three week period. Follow-up conversations or letters will be had with parents where it is deemed to be necessary.

Weekly class attendance will be printed every week on a Friday and the class with the highest attendance that week will receive a class certificate and the 'Top Class Attendance of the Week' trophy.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may undertake a home visit or make a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if they are concerned about the child's safety.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance and issue a Notice to Improve or Penalty notice.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

Schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school in term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”. The DfE state that anything to do with “relaxation and leisure” is not exceptional circumstances. This will include visiting relatives, or a holiday due to mental or physical illness unless supported by medical evidence.

You should apply for a leave of absence by sending an email to absence@loughtonmanor.milton-keynes.sch.uk providing full details and as soon as anticipated. Evidence to support any request may be requested if required. If this is not approved by the Headteacher, a fine will now be issued if there are 10 unauthorised sessions in a 10 school week period, the time does not need to be consecutive as was previously the case.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be ‘exceptional circumstances’. Each application will be considered individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Exceptional circumstances include: visiting a new school, a recognised religious festival, a recognised sporting event, a funeral or taking an external exam.

Any leave taken without prior notice will be unauthorised. If the lack of notice is due to emergency travel you must contact the school as soon as possible with clear proof of your last-minute travel booking. Leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively without proof of emergency.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – the school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member. This will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers.

Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher, local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a fixed penalty notice (FPN). It is now mandatory for a fine to be issued for unauthorised term time leave.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

FPN's are issued to each parent and per child. A FPN is £80 if paid within 21 days, and £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine is not paid, you will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court and could receive a fine of up to £1000 (per parent) and a criminal record.

If a second period of leave is taken within 3 years (same parent/child) then the fine will start at £160 payable in 28 days.

If there is a third offence in 3 years (same parent/child) then the matter will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met due to sporadic absence (not term time leave) and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

Recording and Reporting

SIMS Attendance is used to record absence concerns/issues, parent contracts and penalty notices. All data/information relating to absence is secure and confidential and accessible only by appropriate members of staff.

Attendance information is reported to the Governing Board termly, and to the Local Authority and DfE as part of the school's Census data returns.

Attendance Ladder



Equates to:

Parents
Children

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