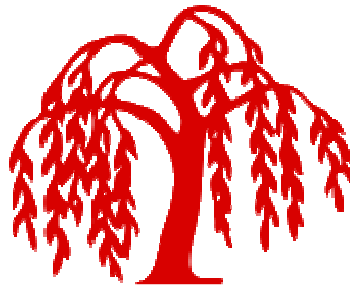


# Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery School



## Attendance Policy

**‘Proud of our school, proud of our achievements’**

*Certified as reviewed and approved by the Governing Body: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017*

*Next review date: Summer 2018*

## Attendance Policy

### Relationship to other policies

- Equality Scheme
- Positive Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Curriculum
- Home/School Agreement
- Inclusion

### Introduction

Effective schools convey their positive regard for regular attendance to parents/carers, pupils and teachers. Children quickly pick up the message that their presence is important. The twice-daily requirement to register pupils can and should be perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive children formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session.

**At Lawford Mead Primary School, we recognise the importance of good attendance. We aim to promote good attendance and have rigorous procedures for following up poor attendance.**

### Attendance

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve absence)

If a child is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first and subsequent days of the absence stating a reason. A note must be sent on the day the child returns to school explaining the absence. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if a child was kept off school for a birthday, then the parents/carers would be informed accordingly.

If parents/carers fail to contact the school to explain the child's absence, the school will contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a letter after 3 days of unexplained absence. **This contact is recorded in a book by the office staff.**

At the end of each term, the school informs parents in writing if their child's attendance has fallen below 95%. During the next term, those identified children are monitored for improvements. If no improvement is seen, then a decision is made as to whether to make a referral to Education Welfare Services.

The school runs a variety of activities to encourage the children to attend punctually. Children with 100% attendance are rewarded by the school each term. Each week, the class with the best attendance receives the attendance trophy and gains extra play.

## Completing the Register

Registers are important legal documents and are kept securely. They can be requested for examination by Ofsted, the Local Authority and Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs). The law requires schools to call the register twice a day. Registers must not be altered. Calling the register is a key part of the school day and should be seen as such by staff, children and parents. When a child is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.

The following symbols are used to complete the school registers:

- Diagonal line to denote presence.
- Circle to denote absence.

The following are completed on our database:

- Daily and weekly attendance figures
- Running totals of authorised and unauthorised absence
- Running totals of late attendance.

## Holidays During Term Time

Parents are advised in the school prospectus, at induction meetings and at regular intervals throughout the year to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays so that their child's education is not disrupted.

### **Under amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, (September 2013) Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Each case will be examined individually but *even where there are exceptional circumstances* it is unlikely that any leave of absence will be authorised if:

- A child's absence has fallen below 95% in the preceding 12 weeks
- It is during the first two weeks of September
- It is during the school's published assessment periods
- The pupil is in Year 6

If one of the above applies and leave is not granted but is taken anyway, it is likely that the school will initiate procedures for issuing a penalty notice (pay £60 within 21 days or £120 if paid in more than 21 days but less than 28 days).

If parents wish to request an absence from school due to exceptional circumstances then they are asked to make an appointment to explain the reason for the request. Written evidence to support the exceptional circumstances will be required. The school will make clear in writing to the parent/carer whether the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

All requests for leave must be made at least four weeks in advance where possible.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which the school and parents/carers, must seek to avoid.

## **Lateness**

School begins at 8.45 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any child arriving later than 8.45 a.m. should report to the School Office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then be sent to their classroom.

The register will remain open for 30 minutes (8.45 – 9.15 am). If children arrive late up to 9.15 am the register will be marked with an 'L' to denote that the child arrived late. Children who arrive after 9.15 am will be marked with a 'U' to denote an unauthorised absence.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Persistent lateness may result in further action being taken.

## **Monitoring of Attendance**

The school takes its responsibilities seriously as excessive amounts of absence both authorised and unauthorised can disrupt continuity of learning. As part of the monitoring process the school will:

- make contact on the first day of absence if notice of absence has not been received from the parent/carer
- Investigate all unexplained absences
- Contact parents if there are any concerns over attendance
- Involve the EWO if parents fail to support the school in ensuring the fullest possible attendance of their children.

If no notification is received about a child's absence a standard letter will be sent to parents asking for the reason. In addition the school will monitor each child's attendance for emerging patterns of both authorised and unauthorised absence. Letters will be sent to parents informing them of any concerns the school may have and encouraging them to improve their child's attendance rate. Parents may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss attendance and if there is no improvement then the matter will be referred to the EWO.

Children's attendance records are shared with parents at Target Sharing Days, as part of the school's Annual Report to parents and at other times throughout the school year as appropriate.

## **What can parents do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why the child is absent
- Send a note when the child returns to school
- Try to make appointments outside school time
- Do not allow the child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

## **If absence continues...**

- The school will refer to the Education Welfare Service.
- Parents/carers may contact the EWO, who will work with them and the school to resolve the situation. (Number available from the School Office)

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

***The DfE circular number 10/99 states that parents may not authorise absence, only schools can do this.***

Absence for the following will be authorised where parents have confirmed the absence on the child's return to school.

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstance i.e. bereavement
- Transport arranged by the local authority (LA) has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond the statutory walking distance.

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised when due to:

- Late arrival after the register has closed
- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Missed bus
- Slept late
- No uniform
- Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents
- Birthdays
- Unapproved holidays
- Family celebration events.

It may be necessary for the school or Education Welfare Officer to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- Appointment card/letter
- Medical certificate
- Letter from GP.

### **The Role of the Local Authority and the Government**

The LA is charged in law with enforcing school attendance and must ensure that schools and parents are fulfilling their statutory obligations, including where necessary, the taking of action through the courts. The LA discharges the enforcement obligations through the Education Welfare Service.

Schools are obliged to send termly records of the overall school attendance to the DfE. An annual attendance target is set and monitored by the governing body.

### **Designated Members of Staff:**

Mrs D. Baker  
Mr. M. Poyton  
Miss. H. Chittick

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be formally reviewed by the governing body on an annual basis or earlier if new guidance becomes available.