



Lyme Community Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Article 29

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.

Article 28

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

This policy relates only to children of compulsory school age unless otherwise indicated.

Principles

Education is important. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

The Department of Education (DfE) recommends a minimum attendance rate of 95%. This takes into account an average level for illness or other justifiable reasons for absence. **Parents and carers have a parental duty to ensure the efficient and full-time school attendance of their child.** (Education Act 1993, 1996) Not to do so is an offence which on conviction carries a maximum fine of £2,500.

We at Lyme expect our pupils to have 100% attendance. This is so they can reach their full potential and gain vital knowledge and skills for life.

Children are sometimes ill or unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if this is the case so pastoral support can be put in place to best support the child and their education. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at an early stage.

If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents need to contact the head teacher so any bullying or learning concerns can be resolved and dealt with quickly so the child does not miss out on vital learning.

Parents should note the 'Parents' Guide to Attendance and Punctuality' booklet sent out annually.

Absences

Attendance and punctuality is closely monitored and parents are kept well informed.

The target is 95%. Concern is expressed if a child's attendance falls below this level and parents are consulted.

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required. Copies of medical appointment letters should be given into the school as proof of where a child was.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

There are 14 weeks of school holidays when appointments can be made and family holidays taken. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, the School Office should be informed in advance.

A "present" mark may still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

Whole days for medical appointments will not be authorised – only the session the appointment time was in except in exceptional circumstances.

Holidays

Holidays MUST BE TAKEN IN SCHOOL HOLIDAYS except under very exceptional circumstances and proof of this provided by parents.

Any holidays taken without the school's (Headteacher's) agreement will be coded as unauthorised.

Medical Appointments

Children/parents are encouraged to visit the doctor, dentist etc., after 3.30 p.m.

However, when this is unavoidable, parents may take their children for medical appointments as long as they sign their children 'in' and 'out' of school. This will also be for hospital appointments which are more difficult to arrange.

A special book is kept outside the school office for this purpose.

It is the school that decides if an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

If the school has no contact with parents/carers for 3 consecutive days in relation to a child's absence, the school is obligated to make a visit to the child's home address. This is to ensure the child's safety and obtain the reason for absence.

The following are an offence by the parent/s:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Truancy from a whole session
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Holidays without the school's agreement.

Parents are expected to contact school and to work with them in resolving any problems together. If you require impartial advice regarding statutory requirements you may contact the EWO service whose number can be obtained from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

We will try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, may utilise other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance if required including proceedings and Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact our Learning Mentor – Mrs Lammond themselves to ask for help or information.

Lateness and punctuality

The School has a structured system for closely monitoring attendance and punctuality involving the Learning Mentor, Office Manager and Headteacher.

School starts at 8.50am and all children are expected to be at school on time and ready to learn. The gates are open earlier so that parents can drop their children off in good time for them to start their day. Arriving late for school is not good for children's self-esteem and causes them embarrassment. They also miss out on vital pieces of their education as they are not there for the start of the lesson.

Punctuality is a vital life skill that our pupils need to develop and carry through their whole lives. If a child is late for school (the gate is locked at 9am) they will have to come through the front entrance so Mrs Marshall can log their name and the time they arrived at school and the parent can complete the Late Record in the file put in the front entrance for that purpose. This is a safeguarding procedure and ensures that every child is marked in the register so in the event of an emergency all pupils can be accounted for.

Codes used for marking the register are detailed on the child's registration certificate.

Persistent Absenteeism

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. These are called "persistent absentees" by the government, **whatever the reason for their absence**. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category. This means that if your child has 3 ½ days of absence in each half term they fall into this category. **That is 19 days of missed education.**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Parents are expected to contact the school **by 9am on every day of the child's absence** unless there is a pre-arranged reason, such as an operation with a set recovery period and the school are aware of the amount of time a child will be having off. Evidence will need to be provided to the school in these circumstances. This also includes hospital and medical appointments.

Lyme sets itself a whole school target of 96% for attendance. We also aim to reducing persistent absences and lateness. We achieve this by promoting attendance throughout the school with the use of posters, competition and a rewards system.

Our rewards are as follows:

- Good attendance and punctuality is promoted and rewarded through awards made by the Headteacher.
- At the end of the week in the 'Celebration Assembly' - 'Class of the Week for Best Attendance' receive a trophy and Sam the monkey to display in their classroom until the following week. The attendance percentages for each class are published in the weekly newsletter.
- **ALL** children who attend 100% in a week go into their classes 'draw'. Every Friday in assembly there is **ONE WINNER** from each class from Y1 to Y6. The winner chooses a prize off the trolley which is displayed in the corridor all week.
- Certificates are also awarded termly to children with 100% attendance.
- A prize draw of £25 toy voucher takes place termly for all children with attendance over 98.5%
- Any child with 100% attendance at the end of the year receives a special gold badge and certificate and joins the 100% club.

Fixed Penalty Notice

The Governors have agreed to adopt the Local Authority Fixed Penalty Notices.

A fixed penalty may be issued if a pupil has 20 sessions of unauthorised absence in any ten week period or 10 marks recorded as late after registration closed. Unauthorised absence could also include holidays taken in term time which have not been agreed by the Headteacher.

A fixed penalty is a fine of £60.00 for each parent or carer per child. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the fine increases to £120.00. If full payment has not been received at the end of 28 days the parent can be prosecuted for the original offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Equality Act 2010

Article 23

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide support to disabled children.

This policy reflects the school's general and specific duties, as detailed in:

- Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality 2001, issued by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE);
- Preparing a Race Equality Policy for Schools (CRE 2002).

It also refers to the Equality Act 2010 which has replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It has consolidated this legislation and also provides some changes that schools need to be aware of:

Race

- The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins
 - Schools need to make sure that pupils of all races are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils
 - Segregating pupils by race or ethnicity
 - Segregation of pupils by race is always direct discrimination. It would thus be unlawful for a school to put children into sets, or into different sports in PE classes, according to their ethnicity
- Schools previously had a statutory duty which required them to take proactive steps to tackle racial discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. Under the Equality Act, this has been replaced by the general equality duty and the specific duties.

Article 14

Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this right.

Religion or belief

The Equality Act defines "religion" as being any religion, and "belief" as any religious or philosophical belief. A lack of religion or a lack of belief is also protected characteristics. The Equality Act makes it clear that unlawful religious discrimination can include discrimination against another person of the same religion or belief as the discriminator.

- Copies of this policy will be available to meet the needs of people, particularly parents and carers, with different communication needs, such as translation into specific different languages, British Sign Language, Braille, etc.)

Policy review: November 2018