



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.

'Going to school regularly is important to your child's future. For example, children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.' Direct.gov website

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure every child is safeguarded and their right to education protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Principles

At Lyme Community Primary School we aim to consistently work towards our goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey the importance of regular, punctual attendance to pupils, parents and carers.

Our school is committed to providing the best possible quality of education to all learners. **For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.**

The following policy sets out the schools aims and systems to ensure that attendance and punctuality is high and all stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and St Helens Local Authority.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

The level of attendance & punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's home-school agreement which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance (over 96%) is important because:

Statistics show that there is a direct link between under-achievement and absence (especially when attendance falls below 95%)

- ✓ Children with good attendance make better progress, both socially and academically
- ✓ Good attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- ✓ Good attenders find learning more satisfying
- ✓ Good attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

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.

Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

Lyme sets itself a whole school target of 96% for attendance. We also aim to reducing persistent absences and lateness.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our weekly newsletter and website, including class attendance
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements and providing class rewards
- Reward high attendance at the end of each year

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.
- Any class achieving 100% attendance receives a 10 minutes extra break after lunch on Friday. This is supervised by their teacher.
- 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.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

Absences

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

The target is 96%. 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.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Holidays

Holidays **MUST BE TAKEN IN SCHOOL HOLIDAYS** except under very exceptional circumstances with 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 file is kept outside the school office for this purpose.

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

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.

Children at this school are often dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

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 Pastoral Manager – Mrs Lammond themselves to ask for help or information.

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.

Lateness and punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of school is used to give out instructions or start learning. If your child is late they will miss important information learning, time with their class teacher and cause disruption to the learning of others. It can be embarrassing for the child and make it more difficult for them to go into class because they feel awkward or worried because they have missed something.

The school day begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time.

The gates are open earlier so that parents can drop their children off in good time for them to start their day.

Punctuality is a vital life skill that our pupils need to develop and carry through their whole lives.

Children arriving late after the gate is locked at 9.00am will have to come in through the main door 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.

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary

Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with St Helens Local Authority and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

What to do if my child is absent?

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent **you must:**

- Contact the school by 9am at the latest on the first day of absence with an explanation of the absence;
- Contact the school by 9am at the latest on any further days of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. *This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.*
- 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.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Pastoral Lead (Mrs Lammond) Deputy Headteacher (Mrs Roberts) or Headteacher (Mrs Cribb) if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the St Helens Local Authority if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Third Day Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, the school will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. A home visit will be made by our Pastoral Lead to try and establish contact.

Ten Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Absence, for whatever reason, disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 96.5%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

Persistent Absenteeism

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 90% over the school year.

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks/30 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees (attendance is less than 90%)**. If your child's attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for absence, will write to you to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work together to improve the situation.

Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013. **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and therefore at Lyme holidays will not be authorised.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to put their request in writing in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Lyme Community Primary School will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance.

Legal measures will be dealt with through a referral to St Helens L.A. Educational Welfare Service.

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

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.

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools attendance policy and website.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to let the office have comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out

investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years.

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.)

Approved by the Governing Body on 3rd May 2018

Next review due by May 2020