

**Attendance Policy**

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| **Schedule for Development, Monitoring and Review** | |
| Approved by governors on: | March 2019 |
| Implementation monitored by: | Rebecca Edwards |
| Review arrangements: | Annually  All policies will be reviewed if there are any significant developments or changes to legislation |
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# Introduction

Leicester Partnership School (LPS) fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support students in school. We are a pupil referral unit for secondary age students aged 11 to 16. We provide suitable education provision to students who have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of being permanently excluded from mainstream education.

The majority of our students have social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) and present with challenging behaviour and many also have special educational needs, including sensory issues, difficulties in communication and a wide range of learning needs. They may also have diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and/or ADHD and many have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

A very high proportion of our students come from economically deprived areas of the city and often display low educational aspirations and a lack of engagement in mainstream education, as a consequence they often have lower than expected academic levels and a history of low or sporadic school attendance.

Our students attend from across Leicester City representing a wide range of backgrounds and communities including but not exclusive to families: for whom English is not their first language, who have no or a small support network available locally, in poverty or financial disadvantage, parent/carers who have mental health and/or substance dependence and where housing is inappropriate or living in socially isolated circumstances

In addition they may have a specific learning need that makes it difficult for them to access the curriculum effectively or because education is not generally regarded positively in their family or local community

The combination of the factors above requires our approach to safeguarding and attendance to be carefully planned and considerate of the young person’s individual needs and the family and cultural context in which they are situated. As a whole school community, we are committed to creating a culture of vigilance and a collectively shared school environment in which all children feel safe and are kept safe.

# Aims

Leicester Partnership School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
* Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
* Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parent/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

# 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

* [The Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II)
* [The Education Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3/chapter/3)
* [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/7/chapter/2/crossheading/school-attendance)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/amendment-regulation-2010_tcm3-8642.pdf)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016](http://legislation.data.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.html)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/pdfs/uksiem_20130756_en.pdf)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

# 4. School procedures

**4.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

* Present
* Attending an approved off-site educational activity
* Absent
* Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

* The original entry
* The amended entry
* The reason for the amendment
* The date on which the amendment was made
* The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 9.00am KS3, 9.15am KS4 on each school day.

At KS3 the register for the first session will be taken between 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am, at KS4 it will be taken between 9.15am and 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.15pm.

**4.2 Unplanned absence**

Parent/carers must notify LPS on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

**Absence Procedures:**

**If a child is absent parent/carers/carers must:**

* Contact LPS as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
* Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – they must do this even if they have already telephoned LPS;
* Parent/carers can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them either then or at a later point.

NB Notes/letters that parent/carers send LPS will be stored on the child’s file.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless LPS has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, LPS may ask parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor’s note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. LPS will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If LPS is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carers/caeres will be notified of this in advance.

**4.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, LPS encourages parent/carers to make medical and dental 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

**4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

**We expect students to be in school at that time.**

Registers are marked at the above times and students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

All registers close 30 minutes after initial registration and In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parent/carers/carers could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or prosecution if the problem persists.

If a student has a persistent late record, parent/carers/carers will be asked to meet with a member of staff to resolve the problem, but parent/carers/carers can approach LPS at any time if they are having problems getting them to school on time.

**4.5 Following up absence**

LPS will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

**If a student is absent LPS will:**

* Telephone or text parent/carers/carers on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days)* if staff have not heard from them;
* Write to parent/carers/carers to if staff are concerned about a student’s attendance to alert them to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
* Invite parent/carers/carers in to discuss the situation with LPS Managers, or other support staff if absences persist;
* Invite parent/carers/carers in to attend an attendance meeting of concern where staff will complete an attendance support plan. This outlines the barriers to attending and any action points for everybody involved to try to encourage and improve attendance.
* Refer to other external agencies for additional support, with the consent of parent/carers/carers. For example, Early Help.
* Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.
* In some circumstances, if a child is absent from school and has not been seen for 10 days, we will arrange for a visit home to be undertaken to establish that the child is safe. This could be LPS staff or a Police Officer.
* NB Letters and notes of our contact with parent/carers/carers will be stored the your child’s CPOMS file.

**4.6 Reporting to parent/carers/carers**

Attendance is discussed with parent/carers/carers at the student’s review or return to school meetings.

# 5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

**5.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence**

LPS Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define ‘exceptional circumstances’ as

1. Exceptional family circumstances such as a sudden family bereavement or serious terminal illness of a close relative.
2. The student performing in a Performing Arts activity (not attending as an audience member).
3. The student is playing in a county, regional or national sports team.
4. The student is taking part in a recognised town twinning exchange programme.

In the case of a) above, parent/carers/carers are asked to contact the LPS office by telephone. In case of (b – d), a letter seeking permission should be sent to the Headteacher at least three weeks in advance of the proposed activities. In the case of (b – d) absences are unlikely to be authorised where the proposed activity is taking place at the weekend or in the evening and the request for absence is for school day(s). As all requests are carefully considered, the outcome of the request will be communicated by letter within 10 days, followed by an authorisation letter.

LPS considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher’s discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

* Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
* Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parent/carers/carers belong. If necessary, LPS will seek advice from the parent/carers/carers’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
* Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes– this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (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

**Penalty Notices – Unauthorised Holidays**

Penalty notices have been introduced by the Government under the Antisocial Behaviour Act 203 S444A and the Education Act of 1996. These will be issued by the Education Department to each parent where there is an unauthorised holiday. The criminal justice and Court Services Act 2000 has introduced the more serious “aggravated offence” for failing to ensure regular school attendance by adding 444 (1) (A) to the Education Act 1996. The Executive Group of the Education Welfare Service have agreed where a child has had 2 periods of unauthorised leave for which the parent has been issued with a Penalty Notice (for each occasion), on the third occasion, no Penalty Notice will be issued and that parent will be taken straight to Court under the higher level aggravated offence. This means that the parent may be subject to a much more severe penalty i.e a maximum fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months in custody or, a community order which may involve them doing a number of hours of unpaid work. The grounds for issuing a penalty notice include:

* Where the Headteacher has granted consent for exceptional leave between identified dates but the child does not return on the agreed date
* Where a parent/carer does not request permission to take their child out of school for a holiday
* Where a parent/carer takes a child out of school for a holiday even though permission has been refused by the Headteacher
* When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as the student needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.

* Before and during assessment periods GCSE or any other public examinations. (No holiday requests during yr11 will be agreed)
* When a student’s attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
* Where a student’s attendance rate over the 12 months prior to the request being made is below 90%, requests will not be agreed.

**5.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parent/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

* A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
* One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
* Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

# 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

**Why Regular Attendance is Important**

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student’s absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school or with LPS is the parents/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

**To help us all to focus on this LPS will:**

* Give parents/carers information on attendance in our regular attendance newsletter.
* Provide parents/carers with updates about their child’s attendance and punctuality, and how this relates to their attainment, in review or return to school meetings, telephone calls home;
* Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
* Reward good or improving attendance through competitions, certificates, assemblies, and outings/events.
* Provide all students with individual attendance targets as part of their behaviour profile which will be discussed and updated weekly, and which will form part of their behaviour contract.
* Ensure attendance is embedded across our curriculum.
* Ensure attendance is discussed at all Pastoral Support Planning and Back to School meetings following exclusion or programme suspension.

# 7. Attendance Monitoring

The attendance lead monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parent/carers are expected to call LPS in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a student is absent LPS will contact the parent/carers to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parent/carers a student’s absence continue to rise, LPS will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student’s individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

# 8. Roles and Responsibilities

**8.1 The Management Committee**

The management committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

**8.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the management committee.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

**8.3 The KS3 and 4 attendance leads**

The attendance leads:

* Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
* Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
* Meets fortnightly with Assistant Heads of School to agree actions to tackle persistent absence
* Arranges calls and meetings with parent/carers to discuss attendance issues
* Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**8.4 Administration Staff**

Administrative staff are expected to take calls from parent/carers about absence and record it on the school system.

# 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head of School Pastoral, Safeguarding, Attendance and Admissions. At every review, the policy will be shared with the management committee

# 10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

# Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **/** | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| **\** | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **B** | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| **D** | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **J** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| **P** | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| **V** | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| **W** | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| **H** | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for student’s absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |