



**Longdendale**  
HIGH SCHOOL

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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## Introduction

School attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Longdendale High School believes that school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Longdendale values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Longdendale recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, excellence and behaviour for learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

## Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that families must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that families secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus.

We also record whether students are punctual to their lessons.

## Categorising Absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the headteacher and cannot be authorised by families. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received and when this is supported by medical evidence where requested.

Families must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence. Reporting absences should be completed before **8:45am**.

## Absence is categorised as follows:

The school may choose to use the following codes on the official register to record attendance or absence.

### Attendance Codes

Code	Meaning
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late before register closes
B	Off site educational activity
D	Dual registered – student attends another educational establishment
J	Interview with another educational establishment or prospective employer
P	Student is taking part in a school approved, supervised educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip organised by the school
W	Work experience

### Authorised Absence Codes

Code	Meaning
C	Exceptional leave of absence authorised by the school
E	Excluded from the school but no alternative provision made
H	Holiday authorised by the school
I	Illness, not medical or dental appointments. Medical evidence may be required
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave which should be used sparingly and only for Year 11 students during public exams
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
W	Work experience

### Unauthorised Absence Codes

Code	Meaning
G	Holiday absence not authorised by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent from school without permission
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

### Illness

Families may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Headteacher to authorise absence where attendance falls below 95% (Covid absences excluded) or to ensure the validity of the absence. Absence evidence can be in the form of prescriptions, medication boxes and/or appointment cards. Medical evidence must contain the student's full name and date prescribed. Please encourage your child to attend school for minor ailments like a sore throat or a headache. If your child has more than three days of consecutive absence, we will require medical evidence to authorise the absence.

A text message is sent to every family whose child has an 'unexplained absence' each morning asking them to contact school; if there is no contact a phone call will be made or a text message may be sent. In some cases, we may undertake a home visit.

### **Prolonged absences**

For prolonged absences exceeding five days we may request additional medical evidence in the form of a Doctor's note explaining the exact reason for absence and recommended period of absence from school. In some cases, the school may refer to the School Nurse Service for additional advice and support.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Families are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day. Families must show the appointment card to school. If a student is absent for a full day to attend a medical appointment then the student will incur half a day unauthorised absence. Optician appointments (unless at the eye hospital) should be made out of school time and will not be authorised.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances

### **Leave of Absence During Term Time**

**Headteachers are not permitted to authorise holiday absence from school unless there are exceptional circumstances.** You can only apply for absence to the Headteacher at least four weeks in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with). It is up to the Headteacher if the leave is granted and how many days your child can be away from school should leave is granted.

The letter must include the following information

- The student's name and form group
- How long the family intends to keep the student absent from school
- The exceptional circumstances that makes it necessary for the student to be absent during school time.

Once the Headteacher has received the request, they will decide whether to authorise the absence and will write to you with the outcome. Families can usually expect a written response within five school days. Families who then decide to take their child out of school during term time, without the Headteacher's permission or when the Headteacher has not authorised the absence, are likely to be issued with a Penalty Notice. Section 444(a) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices to families if they take a leave of absence in term time without the school's authorisation.

If a student fails to return and contact with the families has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the student will lose their school place.

## Punctuality

We expect all students at Longdendale High School to attend school on time, every day. Students who arrive after 8:30am should report to reception, where staff will mark them as late (L). Students should then proceed to Form Time. Students who arrive after 9:30am should report to reception where staff will mark them as late and are considered to have had an unauthorised absence. On arrival, students should proceed to lessons. Any student who arrives late (after 8:30 am) will receive a C2 Late 15-minute detention. If there is a legitimate reason for lateness, i.e. doctors appointment etc, families should notify the school before 8:30am that their child will be late for this reason and on arrival at school should show their appointment card/letter at the student reception. They will not be marked as late but will be given an authorised absence for medical reasons.

If a student arrives late to school on two or more occasions within a five-day period they will be given a C3 detention lasting 30 minutes. Persistent lateness will result in appropriate school consequences such as, punctuality report, attendance plan and/or additional consequences.

If a student arrives late after the close of registration (9:30am) they may be issued with a C3 detention. If a student arrives late after the close of registration on two or more occasions within a five-day period they may be placed in Reflect during their social times.

Text messages are sent out informing families if their child is late. Poor punctuality can also have legal implications for families. Students who arrive after 9:30am without a valid reason will be marked as unauthorised late; 10 sessions of unauthorised late may result in a Penalty Notice warning fine being issued.

If a student is late to a lesson they will be sanctioned in line with the school's behaviour policy which is a C2. Persistent lateness to lessons will result in an escalation of response by the school. This may include punctuality report or an increase in sanction. Please refer to the school's behaviour policy.

## Unauthorised absence

Absences will not be authorised unless families/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation, and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher. If a student's attendance falls below 95% (Covid absences excluded) the absence will remain unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided to the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Visiting the hairdressers or rectifying hair cut/colours at home
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up" student's refusal to attend school
- Minor illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays which have not been approved by the Headteacher
- Staying at home to care for siblings/families
- Attendance appointments which are not for the student Moving House Translating for families or other relatives.

The Headteacher may not authorise a student's absence if:

- The family/carer has not provided any or enough information
- The reason(s) that are given do not fall within those categories defined by the Education Act 1996 as legally permissible
- The reason(s) given would not normally involve an absence of that length
- There is doubt that the information has come from a family/carer or from someone unauthorised to act on their behalf.
- The validity of the information provided is being questioned
- Your child's attendance is below 95%.

## Persistent Absence

Persistent absenteeism (PA) is equivalent to 10% or more absence. An individual child is deemed by the government to be a persistent absentee if their attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised). The school takes all absence seriously and we have defined 'at risk of PA' as the equivalent of 95% attendance or below. In addition, students whose attendance falls below 98% become the focus of interest and monitoring. Sessions of absence are used to determine the Stage of Intervention required for each student according to the time of year, and appropriate follow up is put in place to make the required improvements upon review of data. Covid related absences will not be considered in these figures.

## Home visits

Members of staff from Longdendale may visit your home if your child is absent regardless of whether a reason for absence has been received. Staff who may visit include the school's attendance officer, Heads of Year, Pastoral Support Workers, Teaching Assistants or the Senior Leadership Team.

Members of staff from Longdendale may also contact the appropriate police service and Children's Social Care if they are concerned for a student's welfare.

The school may carry out a home visit where an absence has exceeded three days. If required, the school will request to see the child during this home visit.

If a family has received a site and communication ban school staff will seek to obtain a reason for absence via the schools messaging system or liaise with the contact that the family have nominated.

The school may seek advice from partner agencies to support in ensuring the student is safe. This may include the Local Authority education welfare service, Greater Manchester Police and Children's Social Services.

## Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools where evidence is provided
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system – Elective Home Education
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student

- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student.

All schools are required to inform their LA in every circumstance when they are about to delete a student's name from the admission register.

Schools inform the LA of the student's destination school and home address if the student is moving to a new school (where they can reasonably obtain this information); and inform their LA of all new students, including their address and previous school (again where they can reasonably obtain this information).

### **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

When a student fails to attend school for a fixed period with no contact from families, they are classified as a Child Missing from Education (CME). This may occur when a student does not attend for the first week of a new term with no contact from families or when a student, at any point during the school year, does not attend for 10 consecutive days with no contact from families.

In the event of a student, not attending school for 10 consecutive school days and there has been no contact from families, the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) to report the student as a Child Missing from Education. The CME tracking officer will then attempt to trace the family and will report to the school with an update and advise when the school can remove the student from the school roll.

### **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Whilst home education is not supported by Longdendale High School because of the negative impacts that home education may have on educational outcomes, all families have the legal right to elect to home educate their child/children should they wish to do so.

Any family wishing to home educate their child should, in the first instance, arrange to meet with a senior member of staff at school to discuss this option and discuss the reasons for wanting to home educate. Should the families still wish to home educate their child/children after this meeting they should write to the Headteacher notifying them of their decision.

Once the school is in receipt of this request, they will notify the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service and a parent will be invited to an intervention meeting, which a Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will attend.

The Education Welfare Service will carry out checks on any family who elects to home educate their child/children.

Following home education, should families wish for their child/children to return to school parents/carers should apply online.

If a family, reports a student has moved out of the area school staff may seek advice and share relevant information with partner agencies in ensuring the child is safe. This may include the Local Authority education welfare service, Police and Children's Social Services.

There is no automatic right of return to Longdendale High School once a family has chosen to EHE their child.



## Roles and Responsibilities

Longdendale believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, families, students and the wider school community.

### The Local Governing Body will

- Ensure attendance is promoted to students and their families
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2016 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead whole school attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

### The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Agree school attendance targets
- Actively promote the importance of attendance
- Form positive relationships with students and families
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead whole school attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected, monitored and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Be a good role model by setting a good example to students.
- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile in assemblies, at parents' evenings and in school publications.

### **Heads of Year/Pastoral Support Workers will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their families
- Form positive relationships with students and families
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile in Year group assemblies
- Be a good role model by setting a good example to students.
- Manage the cases of students on report for attendance and punctuality
- Conduct Attendance Panel Meetings, follow up with relevant action plans and monitor the action plans
- Reward students for 100% attendance and punctuality – reasonable consideration will be given for medical and Covid absence on a case by case basis
- Provide Emotional Based School Attendance interventions
- Carry out home visits as and when required
- Request to see your child if a home visit is carried out. If the child is not seen at the property this information may be passed to the Safeguarding Officer, Attendance Welfare Officer and/or the police
- Request Statutory Action where unauthorised absences have been accrued
- Send letters each half term to those families/carers whose child's attendance has fallen below 95%
- Transition visits will also be carried out in some cases.

### **Form Tutors will**

- Actively promote and champion the importance and value of good attendance to students and their families
- Form positive relationships with students and families
- Form Tutors will act in a mentoring capacity and make contact with families to discuss initial concerns about attendance and record these conversations
- Make use of the information and systems provided to understand the current status and trends of attendance and punctuality of the students in their form
- Be a good role model by setting a good example to students.
- Inform families when poor attendance or punctuality is adversely affecting progress
- Engage with the rewards process for attendance
- Issue consequences for poor punctuality to school and to lessons.

### **The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will:**

- Carry out statutory duties in accordance with section 444 of the 1996 Education Act including issuing Penalty Notices and prosecution in line with Local Authority regulations.
- Meet regularly with the designated member of the Leadership Team.
- Communicate with families via telephone and formal meetings to improve student's attendance.

- Maintain a cohort of students whose attendance is of concern and their level of need is above that of the Pastoral team.
- Provide advice and support to school, staff, parents and students.
- Develop and maintain an attendance reporting plan.

### Request that Families:

- Talk to their child about school and reinforce the values of a good education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of regular school attendance within the home environment
- **Contact the school by 8:30am if their child is absent**
- **Contact is required on each day of absence**
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- **Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Headteacher.**
- Provide evidence of their child's illness if attendance is below 95% excluding Covid absence
- Work with school to overcome any difficulties.

### Request that students will:

- **Arrive at school and be at their assembly point by 8:30am in full school uniform with the correct equipment, ready for form time and registration at 8:30am**
- Be punctual for all lessons
- Speak with their Head of Year if there is a need to leave the site at any time during the day (evidence required). In such cases, students must sign out at reception on leaving and sign in again on return.
- Not contact home directly if they feel ill during the school day. Students should speak to a member of staff first, if necessary the school will contact home. Failing to follow this procedure may result in these absences being unauthorised.

### Using Attendance Data

Student attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

Longdendale will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the Local Authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### Support Systems

The school recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Families should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Longdendale recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with families and students
- Attendance panels
- Attendance/Punctuality report cards
- Referrals to external support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Reward systems
- Supportive Timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Support Unit.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both families and students.

Where families fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Longdendale will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## **Legal Sanctions**

### **Attendance agreement/ improvement plans**

An attendance agreement is a voluntary agreement between school and the family, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to meet the agreed actions.

### **Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A student has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve.
- A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.
- Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocol.

Prosecution may occur if families regularly remove their child from school for the purpose of unauthorised leave of absence.

## Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that families realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if families fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A family found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

## Key Legislation and Documents

- [Longdendale High School Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Longdendale high School Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [School Attendance 2020](#)
- [The Education Act 1996 - sections 434\(1\)\(3\)\(4\)&\(6\) and 458\(4\)&\(5\)](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- [DfE Statutory guidance - School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Education Act 2002 Section 32](#)
- [Education \(Penalty Notices\) Regulations \(England\) 2007](#)
- [Children Missing Education 2016](#)
- [Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions 2015](#)

## Attendance Escalation of Interventions

**100% ATTENDANCE = 100% SUCCESS**

Longdendale is a welcoming environment for learning to take place.

Students are happy and feel safe. Attendance is a responsibility shared by all school staff. There are clear links between regular attendance

