

The Lanes Attendance Policy 2025–26: Summary

Key Principles

- Attendance is a legal requirement under the Education Act 1996.
- Change of Statutory Guidance – [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) has been used to inform the policy
- Target attendance: 97% or above. This is an expectation from the DfE when they compare The Lanes to a by our comparator schools.
- Regular attendance is essential for academic success, social development, and safeguarding.
- Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and only in exceptional circumstances. An outline of Exceptional Circumstances has been created by school to ensure consistency. Details are at the end of this document and on the school website.

Definitions

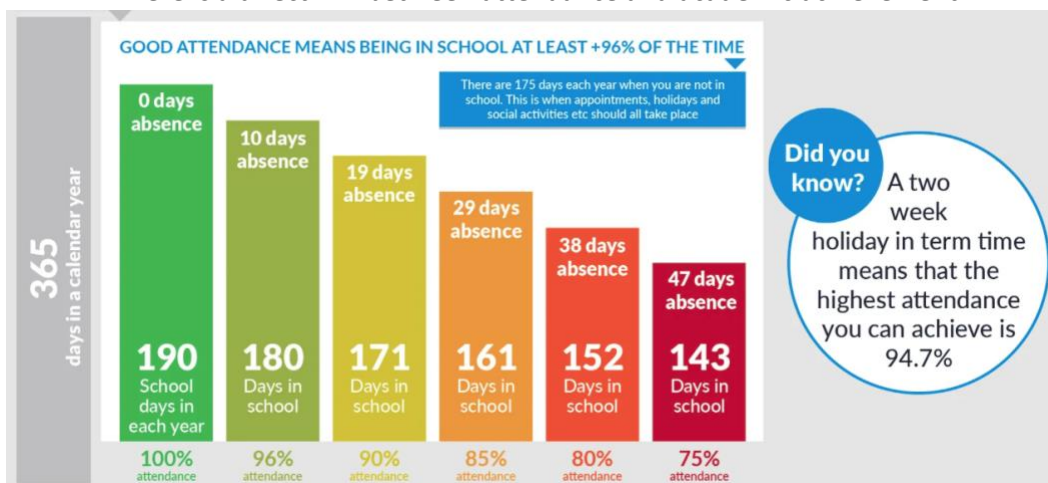
- Persistent Absence (PA): Attendance 90% or below (10%+ missed sessions).
- Risk of PA: 10+ days absence or declining attendance. (90% to 95%)
- Severe Absence: Missing 50% or more of school sessions.
- A session is a morning or afternoon
- Authorised Absence: Illness, medical appointments, religious observance (with evidence).
- Unauthorised Absence: Holidays in term time, lateness after register closes, unexplained absence.

Registration & Lateness

- Gates open: Meadow Lane 8:35, Cator Lane 8:45.
- Registers: Meadow Lane - 8.45, Cator Lane - 8:55. Register remains open for 10 minutes.
- Afternoon register: Meadow Lane 1:00, Cator Lane 1:15.
- Late before register closes = late mark (L)
- Late after register closes = unauthorised absence (code U).

Every child should aim to be in school every day.

There is a direct link between attendance and academic achievement



Every day counts—and every minute matters.

Reporting Absence

- Parents must contact school by 8:55am at Meadow Lane and 9.05 at Cator Lane each day of absence.
- Methods: Phone or email.
- First Day Contact: Text at 9:15 → Call by 9:30 → Second text by 11:30 → A home visit may be carried out if there is no contact made. This is to ensure the child is safe.

Tiered Support System

- Tier 1 – Universal: Positive culture, attendance awards, first-day absence procedures, low level calls from teachers.
- Tier 2 – Targeted: Letters for attendance below 95%, family meetings, support plans.
- Tier 3 – Specialist: Formal plans, multi-agency support, possible penalty notices.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Teachers: Monitor daily attendance, liaise with families, report concerns, promote punctuality.
- Attendance Team: (Mrs Langon, Ms Gosling, Mrs Ireland) Develop policy, Track data, early intervention, implement first-day contact, send letters, support families, signpost resources, hold attendance support meetings.
- Headteacher: Monitor trends, enforce policy, lead culture.
- Parents: Ensure attendance, communicate promptly, engage with support.
- Pupils: Attend regularly, be punctual, seek help if needed.

Leave of Absence

- No holidays in term time unless they meet the exceptional circumstances. This is the decision of the Headteacher.
- Requests must be made 12 days in advance.
- Penalty notices: £160 per parent per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days). May be issued where an unauthorised leave of absence is taken for 10 session or more within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.
- Where a term time holiday is taken, which has not been authorised, of 5 days or more, the parents will be referred to the LA and a penalty notice may be issued without a formal warning.
- Any money gained from penalty notices or prosecution goes to the Local Authority and not the school.
- The process is managed by the Local Authority.

Absence requests – exceptional circumstances

Headteachers have **discretion to authorise absence** *only* in **exceptional circumstances**; there is **no entitlement** for parents to take children out of school for holidays or other non-essential reasons. “Exceptional” means **rare, significant, unavoidable, and short** — events that *could not reasonably be scheduled outside term time*.

As a guide (and there may be exceptions to this) the following **considerations** are used to consider whether the request is exceptional.

- Is the reason **rare and unavoidable**?
- Could this event **only** happen in term time?
- Has the parent provided **supporting evidence**?
- What is the **impact on the pupil’s learning and attendance history**?
- Does the reason align with categories outlined in the policy?

Examples of exceptional circumstances – this is not an exhaustive list

- **Death or serious illness of a close family member**
- **Attending a funeral or memorial service** (for the service and travel time only)
- **Wedding** of a parent or close family member (for service, celebration and travel time only)
- **Serious short-term illness OF PRIMARY CARE GIVER** (including worsening of an ongoing condition or mental health) where alternative arrangements for getting to school have been exhausted including discussions with school.
- **Medical or dental appointments** which cannot be rearranged for before/after school or in a holiday period.
- **Absence recommended by a health professional** as part of treatment, rehabilitation, or recovery for the pupil.
- **Religious observance** on a day set apart exclusively for it and reasonable travel time (for the event and travel time only).
- **A housing crisis** which prevents a child from attending school
- **Respite care** for a child who is looked after by the Local Authority
- **An interview for another school**
- **A child taking part in a performing arts/sporting event** where the child is *participating* at county, national, or international level and *cannot reasonably attend outside term time*.
- **For service children:** preparing for or returning from operational tours, or when shift patterns only allow leave during term time
- **Where parental work requirements genuinely cannot be scheduled outside school holidays** — for example, essential work commitments with evidence from an employer.
- **Acute family emergencies** which cannot be planned for.
- **Other exceptional circumstance which are not listed** – details must be provided as to why it is exceptional and how it meets the considerations;
 - Is the reason **rare and unavoidable**?
 - Could this event **only** happen in term time?
 - Has **supporting evidence** been provided?
 - Does the child have **good attendance** and are they **keeping up with their learning**?

Important considerations

- **Holidays are not exceptional:** Taking a family holiday during term time is not considered an exceptional circumstance, and you cannot usually take your child out of school for this purpose. You could be fined for this.
- **Evidence is often required:** Schools may require proof, such as a medical note/employer confirmation.
- **Case-by-case basis:** The head teacher makes the final decision, and the school will consider each application individually.
- **Consult the school:** It is best to inform the school as soon as possible and consult with them about the specific circumstances.