Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

'Caring, Sharing and Learning Together'

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - *Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority*
  - *Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate*
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most. This is reported through the School Development Plan reviews as well as regular Headteacher Reports.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge through nominated monitoring pairs who visit the attendance lead provide this challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - *The importance of good attendance*
  - *That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues*
  - *The school's legal requirements for keeping registers*
  - *The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate*
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteachers

The headteachers are responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors through the School Development Plan. Headteacher Reports and providing accurate information to the attendance governors during monitoring visits.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The Attendance Manager

The Attendance Manager is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where appropriate

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jenna Halfhide and the Deputy Attendance Manager is Joanne Shobbrook and can be contacted via 01732832660

3.4 The attendance officers/Office Staff

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, the Attendance Manager and the headteacher (if different)
- Ensuring first day calling is completed and correct absence codes are used on each register
- To collect evidence of absences when appropriate such as when absence is under monitoring
- To monitor and record lateness via the front office and ensure gates are locked at 8:45.
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the headteacher where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

The attendance officer is Jane Burbridge (Monday to Thursday) and Julie Plant (Fridays) and can be contacted via 01732832660 – office@leigh.kent.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, by placing a reason for absence and recording the arrival time of children who are late past 8:50.

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and timetabled sessions (when on reduced timetables) on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and email on each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and the contact details of both parents.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Jenna Halfhide (Attendance Manager) or Joanne Shobbrook (Deputy Attendance Manager) who can be contacted via 01732832660 or office@leigh.kent.sch.uk FAO: Jenna Halfhide/Joanne Shobbrook.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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.
We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.
The school day starts at 8:45and ends at 3:10/15/20 for different classes due to staggered exit from the site for safeguarding reasons whereby it reduces crowding and traffic. In addition, this allows for parents to collect younger siblings and walk around to collect older siblings on time.
Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45 on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45 and will be kept open until 9am. If a child arrives between 8:50 – 9 – they are late (L) and after 9am they are unauthorised late (U)

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office, who can be contacted via 01732832660.
We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should call or email the school office to notify of any medical appointment.
However, we encourage parents 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 and return after if they are well enough to do so.
The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (8:50 – 9am - L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (9am – U)

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a welfare check by attending the house or request he police conduct a welfare check.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school may: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports. The school provides an Arbor School Portal for every parent so they have open access to their attendance record.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, unavoidable and often short and something that cannot be scheduled outside of term time such as a holiday (cheaper cost of holidays is not considered an exceptional circumstance). Claims of illness as a reason for a delayed return from holiday, will only be accepted if accompanied by evidence travel tickets.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Exceptional circumstance may include (this is at the discretion of the headteacher and based on the individual circumstances):

- Visiting a seriously ill relative or a bereavement of a close family member
- Attendance to parent's own wedding
- Needs of the families of service personnel are taken into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact in holiday time
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with Special Educational Needs could result in leave being granted at the discretion of the headteacher
- Families recovering from trauma/crisis, particularly when this is recommended by a health professional

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. In addition, the number of days missed, previous absence, impact on intervention/assessments and referrals being made e.g. family support, social care, mental health and SEN, and lastly if alternative care arrangements have been considered by the parent to limit time away from school.
Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible via email to the school office and for the attention of the Headteacher. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
Tickets and travel arrangements should not be booked prior to discussion with the agreement of the school
Parents should not confuse telling the school with having permission
Where the parents and school do not reach an agreement the child's absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences are an offence and can be liable for legal action in the form of a fixed penalty fine.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.
If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.
Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.
The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.
If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.
A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.
In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period (typically 20 day notice in line with LA guidance)
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Explain your school's strategies for rewarding, incentivising and improving attendance – for example, celebrating good attendance in assemblies or on displays. If your school and/or local authority may offer parents an attendance contract, you should mention this here, including when it may be used, and how it works.

- Providing information about the benefits of attendance and the impact of poor attendance to parents and families
- Providing regular reports to parents regarding their child's attendance and clear definitions of what acceptable attendance looks like
- Rewarding children with Marvelous Me badges and house points. Reward is completed discretely in this manner so as not to inadvertently punish students for poor attendance as 'blaming/shaming' the child is not appropriate.
- Creating engaging lessons and activities that make children want to come to school.
- Having an open-door policy and nurturing relationships with families to create open dialogue when attendance issues arise/or to prevent attendance issues arriving.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- Specific and tailored strategies could be applied depending upon the context and reasons for absence such as support with breakfast club, transport arrangements and intervention to support the child in organizational strategies or referrals to external agencies for bespoke support for the family.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

- We will proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- We will work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, we will signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.
- If the issue persists, we will take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Persistently absent pupils (10% or more sessions missed)

- Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:
- Where absence becomes persistent, we will put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, we will work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, we will intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- We will work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Severely absent pupils (50% or more sessions missed)

- Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:
- We will agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

- We will proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- We will work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

7.2 Absent pupils who are SEND, have a social worker or who are a looked after child or previously looked after child

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

- We will maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to the school day and transitions to support pupils on entry to school and throughout transitions.
- Any specific action plans and support plans will be implemented such as behaviour and risk assessments.
- We will ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- We will consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. We will regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Support for pupils with a social worker

- We will seek to understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, have had or are having an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the child.
- We will provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.
- We will work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

Looked after and previously looked after children

- We will have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.
- We will work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance.
- We will work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

- Should a pupil be out of school for a long period of time, our priority would be to create a welcoming and nurturing return to school. As appropriate, we would provide pupil pastoral check ins and regular conversations with parents/carers.
- As appropriate we would provide support to address any gaps in learning that have been created or exacerbated over the period of absence.
- We would create and maintain a risk assessment for any health issues to support ongoing good attendance and well-being.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school monitors attendance at least 6 times a year using various parameters:

- Whole School attendance and absence
- Vulnerable Groups including: SEND, Pupil Premium, SEND and Pupil Premium, English as an additional language and Looked After Children.
- Children whose attendance is deteriorating are identified and monitored individually.

Comparisons are made with national and local data where available. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board through Headteacher Reports and School Development Plan Review and during Governor monitoring visits with the Attendance Governors.
Data is shared with key staff to aid discussions with staff and reported to parent in Termly Reports

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and families, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available

- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 90 - 95% attendance – the class teacher investigates and notifies concerns. The Attendance Manager will contact parent if appropriate. A letter notification will be sent the parent to inform them that their child is at risk of becoming persistently absence.
- 85 - 90% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents and potential attendance monitoring where evidence is required for any absence to be authorised.
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.
- A fixed penalty notice could be sought if an unauthorised holiday was taken, support was not successful or not engaged with.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by the Headteacher and Attendance Manager. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

	Signed	Date
Approved by Governing Body	Governing Body	June 2026
Chairman of Governors	David Dorrell and Stephen Hall	June 2026
Headteacher	Jenna Halfhide and Joanne Shobbrook	June 2026

Appendices

- *Please note that attendance letters can be amended and adapted in line with individual circumstances.*

Appendix 1	**Attendance and Absence Codes**
Appendix 2	**Late letter**
Appendix 3	**Absence letter**
Appendix 4	**School Attendance Meeting letter**
Appendix 5	**School letter warning re: Penalty Notice Referral**
Appendix 6	**Unauthorized absences confirmation of PN request**
Appendix 7	**Response to leave request (Not authorizing)**
Appendix 8	**School letter where they believe a holiday was taken.**

Appendix 2

For more detail about absence and attendance codes from the DfE (see Chapter 8 of the Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk))

Attendance Codes

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school

Absence Codes (authorised and unauthorised)

Code	Definition
	Authorised absence
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
	Unauthorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code	Definition
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Appendix 2

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates_of_lates_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **??** am and at **??** pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. I would be grateful if you could arrange a meeting with myself via the school office to discuss these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Halfhide
Attendance Manager
Co-Headteacher

Appendix 3

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»'s attendance. I would be grateful if you could arrange a meeting with myself via the school office to discuss these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Halfhide
Attendance Manager
Co-Headteacher

Appendix 4

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname»

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «forename»'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed «total_authorised_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «forename»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for ?? at ?? It is important that you and «forename» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

??

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Halfhide
Attendance Manager
Co-Headteacher

Appendix 5

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

Dear **«salutation»**

Re **«forename» «surname»**

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

A penalty notices can be sought for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during 10 rolling school weeks.
On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

I would be grateful if you could arrange a meeting with myself via the school office to discuss these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Halfhide
Attendance Manager
Co-Headteacher

Appendix 6

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

With reference to our letter dated **??**, «forename» has now reached a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Halfhide
Attendance Manager
Co-Headteacher

Appendix 7

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time
For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Halfhide
Attendance Manager
Co-Head Teacher

Appendix 8

Leigh Primary School

The Green, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP
Telephone/Fax: 01732 832660

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. ***(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)***

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 10 rolling school weeks a Penalty Notice will be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £160 per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £80 per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Halfhide
Attendance Manager
Co-Headteacher