

# LONG MEADOW SCHOOL

  

# PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY



Date of last review:	September 2022
Date of next review:	September 2025
Type of policy:	Non-Statutory
Frequency of review:	Every 3 years
Governor committee:	Governing Body

## 1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Long Meadow School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils in line with the 1996 Education Act. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning and undermines educational progress, leading to underachievement's and attainment, impeding a child's ability to develop friendships.

## 2. Aims:

At Long Meadow we aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and rewards pupils' successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Keeping parents / carers informed if we have any concerns.
- 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.

This policy outlines our policy and procedure in relation to non-attendance, late arrivals and late collections.

We will also support parents 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. What is expected of Headteacher:

- The headteacher to meet the legal requirements set out by government.
- The headteacher to work closely with the Local Authority to provide guidance and support through its officers who may take a parent / carer to court or issue fixed penalty notices for not fulfilling their duty under:
  - Section 444-part a and b of the education act 1996
  - Education (Fixed Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004
  - Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The headteacher is responsible for implementing the attendance policy.

## 4. What is expected of the attendance officer both internal and external:

**Our school attendance officer is Laura Fawcett. The school attendance officer will complete the following internally:**

- The attendance officer monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual level.
- The attendance officer to identify patterns of absence and parent condoned absence through effective monitoring and intervention and report this to the headteacher.
- The attendance officer to develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- The attendance officer to maintain communication channels between home and school, informing them when there are concerns relating to late arrival, non-attendance or late collection.
- The attendance officer works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- The attendance officer will arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- The external attendance officer will advise the headteacher when to issue fixed penalty notices.

Details regarding the issuing of fixed penalty notices can be found in the Milton Keynes Council Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices.

## 5. What is expected of the Parents / Carers:

- To ensure their child attends school every day, arriving punctually and being collected on time.
- To explain any period of absence on the first day by phoning or emailing ([office@long-meadow.milton-keynes.sch.uk](mailto:office@long-meadow.milton-keynes.sch.uk)) the school by **9AM**.
- To ensure their child is in school to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance.
- Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes, children are upset about friendship issues or something unrelated to learning which mean they become unhappy and may not want to attend school. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school, so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully, resolved.
- To understand their responsibilities under the 1996 Education Act.

## 6. What is expected of the governing body:

- The governing body is responsible for monitoring figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.

## 7. What is expected of class teachers:

- Class teachers are responsible for recording the attendance on a daily basis and record it on the school system. The class teacher or a member of support staff team will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make a child not want to attend. If there are then these will be discussed with the parent / carer and appropriate action taken.

## 8. What is expected of school office staff:

- School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. School staff will complete the day absence response which consists of contacting parents to establish why their child is absent from school and recording the information internally.

## 9. Communication with parents:

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on its communication with parents:

- All children, including those joining mid-year, are issued with a copy of "Why attendance is important."
- **Children starting in Early Years:** Early years staff liaise with pre-schools to discuss any attendance issues. When parents are invited to talk about their child starting school the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day.
- **Learning constraints:** Individual attendance data is shared at parent consultations meetings and discussions take place where attendance or lateness may be an issue.

## 10. Late Collections:

Children being collected late causes inconvenience to the school and anxiety for pupils. Should a child be collected late on 2 occasions in 3 months, we will write and express our concerns. If late collection persists then the school may put the child into after school care for which the parents will be charged for. Parents are expected to contact the school if they think they may be late.

All teaching staff are expected to raise any concerns regarding children in their class with the attendance officer as soon as they become concerned.

## 11. Lateness:

Arriving late causes disruption to the school, teachers and pupils. On the 4<sup>th</sup> occasion that a child arrives late we will write to parents and express our concerns. If it does not improve, parents will be invited to attend a meeting at the school with the attendance officer. Fixed penalty notices can be issued when a child has been recorded late on 6 occasions in a 12-week period. A firm line is taken on late arrivals.

## 12. Following up absences:

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent / carer to ascertain the reason, this will be done by a member of the office team by telephoning the child's appropriate adult.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken by a Designated Safeguarding Lead where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance codes to use.

**In cases where attendance is being monitored and has not improved we will contact the Local Authority for the input of their attendance officer.**

Further information with regards to Milton Keynes Local authority attendance policy can be found on their website:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/school-attendance>

### **13. Requests for leave of absence:**

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to write to the Headteacher using a standard form available from the school office. This will only be recorded as authorised if there are exceptional circumstances. The form is then returned to the parent noting whether the absence has been authorised or not authorised. No absence will be authorised for children Year 2 and Year 6 during SATs testing in May even if there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher may then decide to call in a parent to discuss their request.

### **14. Approval for term time absence:**

Long Meadow considers each application for term time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical / dental appointments – we do request that these are outside of school hour however we understand that at times this is not possible.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- When a child has been temporarily excluded, he or she will remain on the school roll. The absence is regarded as authorised. If a permanent exclusion is confirmed the child will be removed from the school roll.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English, Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen and Circus people, Bargees 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.

### **15. Holidays during term time:**

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force, changing the rules about term time holidays. The amendments remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances" for doing so. If leave is granted, headteachers should determine the number of days a child can be away from school.

There are many situations which may constitute "exceptional circumstances" and it is often very difficult to decide about what that means. As a general rule, Long Meadow School will interpret "exceptional" in this context as being an opportunity of unique and significant value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This can mean different things in different situations but we will continue to

talk to parents when making decisions about individual requests. “Exceptional circumstances” are unlikely to include family holidays. In most cases the leave granted in these exceptional circumstances will be for a maximum of 5 days in any school year.

Requests for absence during term time without copies of flight tickets clearly showing the date of departure and return will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of the circumstances.

## 16. Monitoring Attendance:

The Attendance Team looks at individual pupil attendance regularly and analyses individual data using the timeline below. This timeline can be accelerated for cases of severely poor attendance. Phone calls will take the place of attendance panels and targets will be agreed upon and review date will be set. If attendance improves then a letter is sent to parents to inform them of the improvements and to congratulate the child.

<b>July</b>	Write to all families whose children were classed as persistently absent (PA) for the year. Medical card included to be stamped by a doctor for every incidence of illness from September.
<b>Mid October</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> attendance review.
<b>Mid December</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> attendance review.
<b>Beginning of January</b>	Update of PA list to include Autumn PA data – PA letter to be sent to parents / carer.
<b>Beginning of February</b>	Review attendance.
<b>End of March</b>	Review attendance.
<b>End of April</b>	Update of PA list to include Spring PA – PA letter to be sent to parents / carer.
<b>End of May</b>	Review attendance.
<b>End of June</b>	Review attendance.
<b>Beginning of July</b>	Write to all parents /carers of PA children for the year informing them of how their attendance will be monitored the following academic year.

## 17. School Attendance Procedures in Regard to Legal Interventions:

Parents who fail to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually may be prosecuted by the Local Authority. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is an alternative to prosecution. It requires a parent to pay a fixed amount as a fine for the child’s non-attendance and avoids a court appearance. It is intended to secure better attendance without taking legal action through the courts. In cases where the school is concerned about the non-attendance of a pupil, parents may be referred to the Senior Attendance Officer at the Local Authority. The Senior Attendance Officer (Legal Interventions) is the “Authorised Officer.” All referrals need to be made to the Youth Offending Team offices at The Manor Road Centre, Oakwood Drive, Bletchley.

More information with regards to FPN’s can be found on the Milton Keynes website:

[https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/Fixed%20Penalty%20Notices\\_FAQs\\_%20February%202020%20AA.pdf](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/Fixed%20Penalty%20Notices_FAQs_%20February%202020%20AA.pdf)

The school needs to show that they have carried out an investigation into the underlying causes of poor attendance before a referral to the Senior Attendance Officer (Legal Interventions) is made. The school would need to provide the following information to the Authorised Officer on the basis of unauthorised absence only. The following is a list of some of the things which would aid a prosecution:

- A log of phone calls made following absence.
- A copy of the letter inviting parent(s) in for a school meeting to discuss attendance.
- A follow up letter stating what has been agreed at the meeting and which informs the parent(s) that all future absence will be unauthorised unless supported by GP or other medical notes.
- Proof that a GP Consent (stamp) form has been sent (if appropriate.)

- Any letters of communication between parents and school.
- Letters between the school and parent / carer including a warning letter.

In addition, the following must be provided when making a referral:

- An up to date attendance certificate.
- Parental details – address etc including full name of parent (s) / carers.
- Pupil details.

Other issues the school needs to consider:

- Underlying issues for the non-attendance.
- Referral into the Children Family Practice (CFP) via MASH.
- Consider a parenting contract.
- Known to have a history or poor attendance in the family.
- Legal sanctions been used in the past.
- Conversations with the pupil.
- SEN issues.
- Looked after children.

### **18. Criteria for referral to the authorised officer:**

The criteria for the referral to the Authorised Officer is an attendance of 90% or less with the majority being unauthorised and some unauthorised absence in the past two weeks. However, that requirement can be different for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) where lower threshold needs to be met. In the case of holidays in term time the school only need to submit a certificate of attendance, along with the full names of parent(s) to the Authorised Officer, as now all term time holiday will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

School will pass details of attendance concerns to the Local authorities' attendance officer who will then follow their procedures.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is enforced per parent per child at the discretion of the Youth Offending Team Manager and a fine of £60, which is payable in 21 days rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28. For regular non-attendance referrals, the school and local authority will decide whether the matter is best dealt with by a FPN warning letter or an Attendance Interview which could lead to prosecution.

### **19. Referral Procedure:**

Once the referral is received the Authorised Officer will assess the referral. If the referral meets Authorised officer criteria then the Authorised Officer will contact the school to arrange an Attendance Interview. The Authorised officer will communicate with the school to fix a date and write to invite the parent(s) / carer to an attendance Interview; this will be held at the referring school. After a case has been referred to the Authorised Officer all absence will be unauthorised unless GP or other medical notes are provided.

Further information will be given on request.

### **20. Prosecutions:**

If a decision is taken to prosecute a parent(s) the Authorised Officer will write the section 9 statement. A section 9 will also be written by the Authorised Officer if a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is not paid with the agreed timeframe.

### **21. Strategies to promote good attendance:**

- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- 100% Attendance certificates will be awarded termly to children with full or very good attendance. At the end of the school year attendance medals will be awarded to children with 100% attendance for the year. (NB medical appointments during term time where a child misses' registration is recorded as absence for medical appointments.)
- Letters to parents.

- Best class attendance percentage each week in the school newsletter and displayed on the attendance display board.
- Meeting between parents and attendance officer.
- Certificates for improved attendance will be awarded where appropriate.



## Attendance

Percentage attendance	Days absent a year	Impact on child's success at school	Future potential
100% Excellent	None	Pupils with these levels of attendance should achieve their full potential and a really good start in life.	Very good chance of 5 or more pass grades at GCSE
96% Good	6 days – 12 sessions	Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their targets but will have to work harder to get there.	75% chance of 5 pass grades at GCSE
90% Unsatisfactory	19 days absent – 38 sessions	Pupils at 90% have missed almost a whole month of school and are in real danger of falling behind in Maths and English. They will have a lot to catch up on and it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.	50% chance of 5 pass grades at GCSE
Below 90% Poor	Between 4 and 6 weeks missed	Deemed as 'persistent absence' and MUST be reported to the authority.	50% chance of 5 pass grades at GCSE
85% Serious concerns	29 days – 58 sessions which is the equivalent to 6 weeks or a whole half term	This time cannot be made up and pupils will find it very difficult to achieve the best that they could.	Less than 30% chance of achieving 1-5 pass grades at GCSE



If your child is:	In a year, your child would lose the following days of education:
5 minutes late	3 days
10 minutes late	6.5 days
15 minutes late	10 days
20 minutes late	13 days
30 minutes late	19.5 days

### What can parents and children do to improve attendance?

- Go on holiday during the school holidays, **NOT** during term time.
- If your child wakes up feeling a bit under the weather, send them in. We **WILL** send them home if they are not well enough to be in school.
- Arrange haircuts, doctors' appointments, dentist appointments after school, at weekends or during school holidays.
- Come and talk to us if you need support getting your child into school every day, on time.