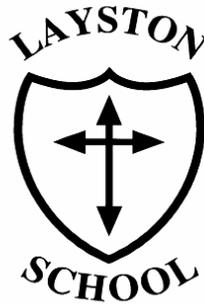




Layston C of E First School



Attendance Policy

Reviewed

June 2017

Next Review

June 2018

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body annually.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 5.6.17.

It is due for review in Summer Term 2018 (up to 12 months from the above date) by the Governing Body.

Signature M. Bloomfield.....

Date5.6.17.....

Head Teacher

SignatureC. Tallis.....

Date5.6.17.....

Chair of Governors



At Layston CofE First School we want the whole school community - governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Study after study has highlighted the positive link between attendance and educational achievement. Children who are persistently late or absent from school are vulnerable to falling behind with their learning. This can impact on their progress and their ability to meet age regulated learning expectations.

Although parents / carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

The nominated governor for attendance is **Claire Shearn**.

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

The School will be expected to:

- Provide a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raise awareness in parents and carers of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education;
- Ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis;
- Implement First Day Response - phone parents on the first morning of absence if no reason has been given for the child's absence;
- Discuss attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary;
- Contact families where concerns are raised about absence initially through letters to parents highlighting when their child's attendance is at or below 95% (letter 1) and then again if the absence rate is at or below 93% (letter 2). A formal letter advising parents of their child's unauthorised absence and warning

that a penalty notice will be issued if the unauthorised absence reaches 15 sessions in the current and/or previous term (known as Appendix A) should also be sent. (See sample letters at end of document which can be tailored to meet individual situations).

- Notify the schools Attendance Officer (AO) of any child who fails to attend regularly.
- Use Fixed Penalty Notices by way of dealing with attendance matters / unauthorised absences (totally 15 or more in the current and/or previous term) and may request Hertfordshire County Council to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice on their behalf.
- Monitor individual attendance where concerns have been raised;
- Making referrals to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) service where deemed necessary.

The Parents will be expected to:

- Ensure that the school is informed of any changes of contact details;
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Ensure they have read the attendance policy.
- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment;
- Provide proof of absence i.e. a doctor's note, an appointment card, copy of a prescription where the absence rate is at or below 93%
- Make requests for authorised absence in term time ONLY in exceptional circumstances. Any requests need to be in writing.
- Be vigilant about ensuring all children are in school during April, May and June when preparation for and statutory testing takes place. A child's absence during a test equates to failure which negatively impacts on the school standards.
- Inform the school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school;

- Return their child to school as soon as they are fit to do so. In relation to sickness and vomiting the child should have 48 hours free of symptoms before return to school. See guidance on return dates to school following infectious illness copies available school office.
- Confirm the explanation for absence in writing on return to school.
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours. If unavoidable inform the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter);
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve any issues which may lead to non- attendance.
- Maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary;
- Understand that term time absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Do not book holidays during term times.

The Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually;
- Be ready to learn.

Doors Open

- At 8.50 am. Pupils may enter the building at that time. Pupils should not arrive at school before 8.40 am.

Registration

- Registers are called at 9.00 am and at 1.00 pm. Registers close at 9.10 am and at 1.10 pm. Registers are marked consistently by staff.
- Any pupil arriving after 9.00 am but before 9.10 am will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session. All late arrivals must be through the main school reception area.
- Any pupil arriving after 9.10 am will be marked as absent for that session.

- For the afternoon session, any pupil arriving after 1.00 pm but before 1.10pm will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session. All late arrivals must be through the main school reception area.
- Any pupil arriving after 1.10pm will be marked as absent for that session. Registers will be marked in accordance with DfES guidance.

Lateness

- Any pupil arriving after 9.10 am should report to the School Office to sign in.

Following up Lateness

- Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by the Head Teacher, who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality. A second late mark in any month will trigger a letter home.

Absences

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school. A telephone call is acceptable.
- On return a written explanation should be provided to school to be kept on file.
- Absences are authorised by the Headteacher.
- The school may decide not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.
- The school will check up on any absences where a reason has not been notified.

Definition of absence

Absences as defined by the DfE are in 2 categories either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Illness, medical or dental appointments	Holiday unauthorised by school or in excess of agreement.

Late after registers closed with a satisfactory reason	Late after registers closed with no satisfactory reason
Exclusion	No reason/ unsatisfactory reason provided provided for absence
Day set aside exclusively for a religious observance	
Gypsy, Roma, traveller absence for occupational reasons	
Holiday authorised by school	
Leave of absence authorised by the school	

ALL absences whether authorised or unauthorised count towards persistent absence figures.

Therefore we will be sending absence letters to parents at 95% and 93% to help them monitor their child's absence and take appropriate steps to make improvements.

In terms of persistent absence figures it is the unauthorised absences which eventually could attract a fixed term penalty notice and this will soon be capped at 15 sessions across a year(a session is a half day).

Leaving and returning to School during the School Day

- When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified and pupils must be signed in/out at the office.

Term Time Holidays

- With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of head-teachers to authorise leave of absence other than in exceptional circumstances.

Rewards

- A certificate is awarded each week in celebration assembly to the class which has the best attendance.
- Good attendance is rewarded with certificates to pupils termly and at the end of the school year.

Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

- The Headteacher monitors all pupils' attendance monthly.
- The School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for persistently low attendees (children with attendance at or below 95%)
- The School works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO, the School will make a formal referral to Children, Schools and Families.

Publication of Information

- Parents, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues on a regular basis.
- The School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff.

Letter 1

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

Our records show that since the beginning of this academic year «chosen_forename»'s attendance has been «percentage_attendance»%. This level of attendance is below the school's minimum target attendance of 96% and, to put this into perspective, 90% attendance is equivalent to missing half a school year in the five years of compulsory secondary education.

Ongoing poor attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success and could also affect future applications for jobs or college places. Many pupils have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long or numerous periods of absence.

We wish to help «chosen_forename» to improve «his_her» attendance. If you would like to discuss «chosen_forename»'s attendance please contact myself on and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting.

We would appreciate your support to make sure «chosen_forename»'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Letter 2

«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

I refer to my letter of regarding **chosen_forename's** attendance.

«chosen_forename»'s attendance overall for this academic year is «percentage_attendance»% which is below the School's minimum target of 95%. We understand that some absence due to illness may be unavoidable. However it is important the School are aware of any on-going health problems so we can put the correct support in place.

To put your child's absence into perspective, 90% attendance is equivalent to missing half a school year in the five years of compulsory secondary school education. We are sure that you are aware that every school day counts and missing any time from school results in lost learning. We want to support «chosen_forename» and make certain that «he_she» does not get behind with work or miss out on any opportunities school offers.

Please note that as your child's attendance has dropped below 94% you will be required to provide proof of absence i.e. a doctor's note, an appointment card, copy of prescription, in order for the school to authorise any future absences. If the school is not provided with evidence of proof of absence we will be required to change these absences from authorised to unauthorised.

Ongoing unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued, which is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days parents could be prosecuted for their child's poor attendance. It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school.

We will continue to monitor «chosen_forename» attendance. If you wish to discuss «his_her» attendance with us please contact me on I will be happy to talk with you or arrange a meeting if required.

Thank you for your co-operation and support.

Yours sincerely

Appendix A

Dear

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Name of pupil ----- Registered at ----- (school name)

This is a formal warning that you are at risk of being in breach of the regulations stated above. ----- (child's name) has been absent from school and the absence(s) has/have not been authorised.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 15 or more in the current and/or previous term you will be in breach of the regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a penalty notice.

The notice requires you to pay a penalty of £60 within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to pay a separate penalty and penalty notices are issued for each child to whom the absence relates.

Payment of the penalty enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the period in question of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. (section 444, The Education Act 1996).

Failure to pay the penalty means you are liable to prosecution for the offence, by summons to appear before the local Magistrates Court. On conviction you may be liable for a fine of up to £1,000 per parent. This is a criminal offence which carries a criminal record. The Local Authority will ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you.

If you fail to ensure your child attends regularly and 15 sessions of unauthorised absence is reached a penalty notice will be issued. **You will not receive a further warning before the penalty is imposed.**

If you believe there are legitimate reasons for your child's absence please contact me within 5 working days to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely