

Attendance Policy



The Livingstone Road Primary Federation adopts the principles and procedures of this Policy for both Schools

Review Cycle: Annual

Last Reviewed: 12th March 2019

Responsible for Review: EHT

Next Review Date: March 2020

Policy Statement

“Excellent Attendance =Excellent Progress”

Punctuality and good attendance are crucial to the success of our pupils and to the smooth running and organisation of the Livingstone Road Primary Federation, for the benefit of all. In law, parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school and are punctual. It is the responsibility of the school to support and encourage full attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Our policy is to:

- Emphasise the positive reasons for full attendance
- Recognise and acknowledge good attendance, including attendance achieved in very difficult circumstances (e.g. chronic illness)
- Identify and act upon difficulties at the earliest stage, working closely with parents or carers
- Avoid disappointment in connection with requests for absence, through clarity and consistency

The schools greatly appreciate the steps taken by families to secure good attendance, and the willingness of parents to share information about circumstances which may give rise to difficulties. We know that children will often get ill, especially when they start school in the Reception class and at particular times in the year. With this in mind we would expect to see 96% attendance or above for all our children, which is also the national standard for good attendance set by the DfE. The 96% attendance benchmark, takes into account illness, which equates to approximately 9 days absence across an academic year.



Children who have 96% attendance or above are celebrated every half term in Celebration Assembly with a certificate to take home and the chance for them to win a special prize from the prize draw. Children who have maintained 100% attendance throughout the school year will be awarded a certificate at the end of every term, then will have an extra special treat at the end of the academic year.

Daily Routine

The school day starts at 8.40am. The classroom door and register will be open from this time. At 8.55am the classroom door is closed and the register sent down to the office. Any child arriving at school between 8:55 and 9:00 will need to arrive via the school office and be signed in. These children will be marked in the register as an L (late) code. Any child arriving after 9.00am must come to the school office and will be marked with a U (unauthorised) code in the register. Persistent lateness is monitored and parents will be invited in if a pattern of lateness is seen.

First Day Contact and Notification on Return

Parents must inform the school of reasons for absence on the first day of any absence by 9.30am. The school's administrative staff will contact parents via a telephone call and/or text on any day a registered pupil is absent without explanation, if a phone call has not been received detailing a child's absence. Parents will be asked to keep the office informed of current daily contact numbers. If contact cannot be made and if parents fail to inform the school of the absence, then the absence will be marked as an O code, without authorisation until we have further notification of the reason.

Where children are registered as "at risk", Children and Family Services will be informed of the absence on the same day. If the Executive Headteacher has any cause for concern about the reason for absence, this will remain unauthorised until these reasons have been discussed with the parents and a satisfactory explanation secured. If the school does not accept the reason given, the absence may remain unauthorised.

Requests for Authorised Absence

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, which came into effect on the 1st September 2013, schools are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances.

In making a request for leave of absence from school in term time a parent will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional, and therefore why the activity cannot be undertaken either at a weekend or within the normal 13 weeks holiday. The legislation states that the Executive Headteacher can only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

What amounts to exceptional circumstances is to be decided by the Executive Headteacher. If a parent takes their child out of school without permission the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised leave of absence, which may result in a request being made to the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

A form is available for exceptional circumstances requests for authorised absence in the front entrance of each school. This should be completed with as much detail as possible and returned to the school office. The Executive Headteacher will read through each request and the decision to grant authorised or unauthorised absence will be made. Holiday dates for each school year will be advertised to parents before the end of the previous school year.

Legislation makes it clear that the burden is on the parent to show why requested absences should be authorised. The Executive Headteacher will consider the following (and may contact the parents to discuss their request in detail):

- The nature and purpose of the absence, and the reason for the request
- The duration of the absence and its likely impact on the education and progress of the child
- The circumstances of the family and the wishes of the parents
- The distance of any journey involved
- Whether the absence is seen by the family as a rare event, not to be repeated
- The attendance record of the child at present and for the previous year.

Parents will be advised that, while applying the above criteria, the following requests may be considered as reasonable:

- Medical or dental appointments e.g. in hospital clinics; parents are required to provide proof in the form of an appointment letter or card.
- Family bereavement- one day for local funeral ceremonies. Additional days will be considered depending on the distance required to travel. A maximum of 3 days will be authorised when a funeral is overseas.
- Special family occasions e.g. weddings on school days. Please note only the actual wedding day will be authorised.
- Days of obligatory family religious observance.
- Interviews and examinations e.g. in connection with school transfer, musical tuition. The school will expect the child to return to school after the examination.

Where an absence is authorised and families fail to abide by any agreement, additional absences will be unauthorised and future requests refused. Absences taken without consultation will be unauthorised. Absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Traveller Children

Section 199 of the Education Act 1993 acknowledges the special position of Traveller Children. The Executive Headteacher will consult the School Attendance Worker (SAW) if there are concerns.

Off-Site Tuition

Where a child's special educational needs are recognised by the school, and special tuition/therapy not available in school is required, the Executive Headteacher may authorise absence for specific times when such tuition or therapy may be given outside school.

Absence for Performance

The Executive Headteacher may grant leave of absence for approved public performances considering the following:

- The nature and purpose of the performance.
- The frequency of absence requested and the likely impact on the child's education and progress.
- The child's attendance record.

Where a child is paid for their performance, a licence must be obtained from the LA, and absences will be monitored to ensure that they comply with the permissions given in the licence. Any concerns will be communicated to the SAW.

Monitoring and Support of Attendance

Half termly consultations (audits) of attendance occur through the school year with the School Attendance Worker and the Deputy Headteacher. Any child below 95% attendance will be discussed at this consultation and the reasons for absence will be looked at.

Each child will be discussed on an individual basis. From this discussion it will be decided if a meeting with the parent should go ahead with the Deputy Headteacher and/or the School Attendance Worker. Where possible the school will make all reasonable steps to support parents to ensure good attendance.

Sometimes parents will be asked to provide medical evidence for when their child is off sick. Parents will be notified of this via a letter from the school office.

Any child sitting at 90% or below is classed as a persistently absent child by the Department for Education. Such children's attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis. These children may be referred to the School Attendance Worker who will work directly with the family to improve attendance. If a child's attendance is still a cause for concern the School and Local Authority may consider issuing the parent with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuting for failing to ensure the child's regular attendance at school is in line with the Education Act 1996. Usually a Fast Track contract meeting is set up to improve attendance within 12 weeks before any legal intervention occurs. This meeting will involve the School Attendance Worker, parents and school.