



*Children and adults are at the heart of our school;
our school is at the heart of our community.*

School Attendance policy

February 2023

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1. Introduction

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually, unless there is an unavoidable reason for absence. At Lakeview school attendance is a key priority, as it gives our children the best opportunities to achieve and progress to their maximum potential. Good levels of attendance ensure that children progress academically in line with their peers, are more likely to be able to progress socially, have enhanced self-esteem, develop time management skills and develop a respect for the importance of punctuality and attendance which is a life skill in adult life.

2. Aims:

- to ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- to encourage and assist all children in achieving the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- to communicate the importance of continued school attendance as essential, for all children, if they are to be successful - working in partnership with parents.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- to ensure school attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

3. Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling, and regular absences will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines, so this may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. A child with 90% attendance, equates to ½ day missed every week - over a school year that would equate to one month off school, that means a child would be missing 100 lessons of learning time.

% attendance	Number of days missed	Impact on child's success at school
100% excellent	None	Pupils with these levels of attendance should achieve their full potential and have a really good start in life.
97% very good	6	
95% satisfactory	10	Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their targets but will have to work harder to get there.
90% unsatisfactory	19	Pupils at 90% have missed almost a whole month of school and are in real danger of falling behind in maths and literacy. They will have a lot to catch up on and it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. Less than 90% is seen as 'persistent absence' and must be reported to the local authority.
85% Serious cause for concern	29	Pupils have missed six weeks or a whole half-term of school. This time cannot be made up and pupils will find it very difficult to achieve the best that they could do
80% serious cause for concern	40	Pupils have missed almost a whole term which is virtually impossible to catch up

The impact of attendance on attainment

Less than 85% Attendance 88% Attendance	Less than 30% chance of 5 A*-C grades Less than 35% chance of 5 A*-C grades
90% Attendance 92% Attendance	Less than 50% chance of 5 A*-C grades Fair chance of 5 A*-C grades
94% Attendance Above 95% Attendance	Good chance of 5 A*-C grades Very good chance of 5 A*- C grades

4. Definitions

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Any information about the cause of planned absences should be made in writing to the school. The school is required to record the cause of all absences.

Authorised absences are, mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as:

- Sickness/illness of the child (not that of the parent or sibling)
- Day/s for specific religious observance
- School is closed due to unforeseen circumstances
- Temporary exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll
- Off-site education
- Attendance at funerals of an immediate family member
- Any other reasons outlined in other linked policies

Unauthorised absences are those that the staff at school do not consider reasonable, or for which no 'leave' has been given.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Absences that do not have a legitimate reason
- Children arriving at school too late to get an attendance mark
- Taking holidays during term-time, this includes attending a family wedding and extended family funerals.
- Birthdays
- Shopping trips
- Dropping off siblings

Planned Medical Appointments

Emergency and planned medical appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible. The school requires proof of medical appointments.

Persistent absenteeism

Attendance at 90% or below is deemed to be 'persistent' absence, and a trigger for concern which is reported to Bedford Council. If a child's attendance falls below 90%, no further absences can be authorised.

5. The Legal background

The Education Act of 1996 makes it an offence if parents 'fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil.' Prosecution for this offence means that parents may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), a fine of up to £2500 per parent which also incurs a criminal record or even receive a custodial sentence. The legal position on holiday absence was clarified by the Supreme Court in 2017 and Bedford Borough council's directive is that holidays cannot be authorised in term time. Furthermore, we are obliged to report parents who take their child on holiday in term time to the Council's Senior Attendance Officer. Five days absence can mean a Fixed Penalty Notice being imposed whatever the level of attendance.

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence

6. Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of school staff. The school operates an open-door policy and seeks to improve attendance working in partnership with parents.

- Attendance data is monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy/practice.
- Attendance awards are presented weekly, half-termly and at the end of each school year.
- Parents are reminded regularly (via newsletters, parent's evenings, etc) of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Children who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- The Inclusion Lead will make a termly report to the schools Governing Body on attendance matters.
- The Inclusion Lead will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Inclusion Lead may contact Children's Services in order to identify how best to support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- 100% attendance will be celebrated and rewarded on a half-termly basis.
- Attendance winners for each class are shared half termly in the learning newsletter.
- The number of children who have 100% attendance for the term and year to date will be shared on newsletter.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Parents Responsibility

There are legal obligations on parents to secure education for their children of compulsory school age, whether at school or otherwise. If they are on the school roll, parents should send children to school regularly, punctually and in a fit state to learn.

If the school is to achieve its attendance targets, parents must see themselves as partners with the school in their children's education and support the school in the following ways:

- Ensure the fullest possible attendance of a child by keeping requests for children to be absent from school to a minimum
- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school office on every day of an unplanned absence, as soon as practically possible by telephone.
- When absence is unavoidable, please contact the school office by phone or email before 8:00am.
- On the day of absence, where no reasons have been given, the school will contact parents/carers.
- In cases of long-term sickness (more than one week) a medical certificate should be obtained from the GP and a copy given to the school
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, and is collected from school on time.

The Governing Board Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher/Inclusion Lead Responsibilities

- Implementation of the policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Instruction to Bedford Borough to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The school office/Learning Mentor

- To record the reason for absence, when a child does not arrive at school or when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data.
- To promptly inform the Inclusion Lead if there are concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority.
- To support the Inclusion Leader with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- To inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

8. Recording attendance

Pupils must arrive in school punctually on each school day. It is our legal duty to keep an attendance register.

We will take our attendance register twice a day, at the start of the first session of each school day and immediately after lunch. Pupils are recorded as:

- Present

- Absent
- Reason for absence

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 8:55am. Arriving after 8:55 children will be marked as late. The register for the second session will be taken by 12.35pm for Early Years, 1.05pm for Key Stage 1 and 1.20pm for Key Stage 2.

9. Absence procedures

Unplanned absence

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence. We might ask for medical evidence if attendance is a concern.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school with proof of absence. Letters explaining absence should be emailed to the school office.

We encourage parents/carers 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.

Absence for 4 weeks or more

If a child does not attend school for a period of four weeks and there has been no contact between parents and school, they will be removed from the school roll. During this time procedures will be followed to locate and ensure that the child is safe. In the first four weeks that a child does not attend school, the school and other agencies, will make enquiries and assess the child's circumstances and their vulnerability.

10. Incentives

The following incentives will encourage school attendance:

Weekly

Attendance reward for the class with the highest attendance

Every Half-term

All 100% attendees will receive an attendance sticker

Every Full Term

All 100% attendees will get a certificate

At the end of the academic year

Children who have 100% attendance for the whole year will receive an attendance reward and become members of the 100% club and receive a badge.

Class with the overall best attendance will have a class reward

11. Holidays in term time

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law for authorised leave in school time. Taking holidays in term time affects a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during term time. The Government believes that any savings parents make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

Following government regulations that came into force in September 2013, Lakeview School will not authorise any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school will consider the circumstances of each application on a case by case basis. If leave is granted the headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be absent from school with authorisation.

All applications for leave of absence must be made **at least 3 weeks in advance** using a 'Children's leave of absence' form.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice and fines

12. Procedures

If a child's attendance falls below 97% - local authority school target

Attendance percentages below 97%

Parents are contacted by the learning mentor and a conversation to discuss the decline in attendance will take place. Support will be offered to the family if required and appropriate.

Attendance percentages below 95%

A letter will be sent to the parent outlining the child's attendance percentages and concerns offering a meeting to discuss any support that can be offered in aim of improving the child's attendance.

If there is no improvement after 4 weeks or attendance continues to decline, a further letter will be sent to invite parents to a formal attendance interview where an action plan will be created with the inclusion lead

Attendance percentages below 90%

If attendance does not improve, the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority, will be informed and it may be necessary to take further action. A warning letter will be issued if ten sessions or five days of unauthorised absence are recorded over a period of twelve weeks. The warning letter will be effective for 12 weeks and during this time it is expected that the pupils' attendance increases. If there is no improvement after 4 weeks, or if further unauthorised absence occurs, then a letter will be sent referring parents to the local authority for a PACE, 'Police and Criminal Evidence' interview. In this process, each parent is interviewed separately under caution with a firm commitment on the part of the local authority to prosecute.

As a school, this is not a process we wish for any of our parents to have to experience, therefore we will endeavour at every opportunity to support parents in ensuring children attend school as per their legal responsibilities and as outlined in our expectations.

The Lakeview team

Agreed: February 2023

Review Date: February 2025

Attendance is EVERYONE's Responsibility

Attendance is EVERYONE'S responsibility



Getting to school on time.....

Gates Open

8:40AM

Gates Close

8:50AM



Absence

If your child is too unwell to attend school then you must tell us before 8am. **Unless advised otherwise, you should also report their absence every day thereafter.**

To report absences, you can:
Call... 01234 741653 and choose option 1

Email... school.office@lakeview.school.co.uk

Any absence lasting 5 days or more will require evidence, the school office will call to discuss this should your child's absence reach this point.

Appointments

Any appointments for your child should be made outside of school hours, however we understand that this is not always possible. If your child's appointment falls within the school day you **must:**

- notify the school in the morning
- provide evidence of the appointment
- let us know what time you will need to collect them

Unless evidence is provided, missed registration times will be recorded as unauthorised.

Concerns

If your child's attendance falls below our expected level, you should expect to be contacted regarding our concerns. Remedial measures may be necessary to support you.

Holiday

Holidays during term time will not be authorised unless exceptional circumstances. You may be fined for unauthorised holidays of 5 days or more. If you are planning on removing your child from school for a holiday or leave of absence you must advise the school and complete the Leave of Absence form from the school office.

To read our attendance policy in full, please follow the below link:

<https://www.lakeview.beds.sch.uk/page/?tide=Policies&pid=11>

Appendix 2

Procedure for Leave of Absence Requests and Medical Appointments

Appointments

1. Parent notifies the office of an appointment.
2. Appointment date and time added to Child Leave of Absence Requests and Appointments spreadsheet (Tabs are named by month. Appointment should be added to the appropriate month on the spreadsheet in date order).
3. Office requests evidence of appointment, if it hasn't been provided at the time of notification from parent.
4. Child/ren's class teacher/s and Learning Mentor notified of any special arrangements in regards lateness or early collection.
5. Learning Mentor to amend register, as necessary, if registration time has been missed.
 - a. M recorded on register for appointments where evidence has been provided.
 - b. O recorded on register where evidence has not been provided.
6. If evidence of appointment is provided after the appointment, registration mark to be amended, by office staff, from O to M.
7. After appointment date / time has passed, office to change the cells in row on Child Leave of Absence Requests and Appointments to red to indicate appointment has passed and process complete.

Leave of Absence Requests

1. Parent to be given a Leave of Absence form for completion.
2. On receipt of the completed form, office to add requested days to Child Leave of Absence Requests and Appointments spreadsheet.
3. Within 24 hours of receiving the completed form from parent, the form should be given to Headteacher for consideration.
4. Within 48 hours of receiving the form back from Headteacher, the parents should be informed, in writing, of the Headteacher's decision. This letter should be sent to parent through Parentmail.
5. A pdf copy of the completed Child's Leave of Absence form and letter to parent should be uploaded to the child's electronic pastoral file.
6. The Child Leave of Absence Requests and Appointments spreadsheet should be updated at each stage of the process.
7. For each session that the child misses, the register should be coded with the appropriate mark
 - a. C for authorised circumstances
 - b. H for authorised holiday
 - c. O for unauthorised absence
 - d. G for unauthorised holiday
8. Once the child returns to school after leave has been taken, office staff should count the unauthorised sessions and if sessions total 10 or more, a request of a Penalty

Notice (PCN) should be completed and emailed to Bedford Borough, with the pdf of the Leave of Absence Form and the child's attendance certificate.

9. Requests for PCNs should be emailed to Bedford Borough and uploaded to child's electronic pastoral file within 1 week of child's return date.
10. After point 1-9 above has been completed, office to change the cells in row on Child Leave of Absence Requests and Appointments to red to indicate process complete.

N.B. We no longer need to request any evidence of flights / holiday bookings.

Extended Leave from School

Children who have not attended school for 2.5 weeks should be reported to the School Business Manager.

With consideration of any safeguarding concerns and family circumstances, the School Business Manager will contact parents, in writing and by phone, to inform them of the school's attendance policy, which states that children whose absence from school extends to 4 weeks or more, are at risk of being removed from school roll.