



Attendance and Absence Policy

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Statement of intent

LJFS believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our students.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

2. Definitions

The school defines absence as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

The school defines an authorised absence as inclusive of the following circumstances:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

The school defines an unauthorised absence as inclusive of the following circumstances:

- Parents keeping children away from school without sufficient reason
- Truancy
- Absence which has not been sufficiently explained to the school's satisfaction
- Arrival at school after the register has closed without sufficient reason
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time to which the school has not agreed
- Leaving school during the day without sufficient reason and agreement from the school
- Illness- after 3 days, medical evidence (eg. appointment card) is needed

The school defines persistent absenteeism (PA) as:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason; absence falling below 90%

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring students do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding is responsible for informing the LA of any student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Child Missing from Education for more than 21 days that cannot be located/left LA

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Students are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

4. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk students as part of their inductions and annual refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.

Teachers and support staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their professional development.

5. Student expectations

Students will be expected to attend school every day they are required to be at school and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year. This is in student planners pages 23-24

The school will expect all students to attend lessons punctually.

Students will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

6. Students at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to students at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.

- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending fast track letters to parents.
 - Having a regular tutor review.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a student becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome the student back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the student to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the student's parent to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a student at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the student in line with the school's duty of care.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Students who are eligible for FSM
- Students learning ESL
- Students with SEND

6. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of any absence.

Parents will be required to send a note on the first day their child returns with a signed explanation as to why they were absent. This must be done even if the school has already received communication regarding the absence.

Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

A telephone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding.

The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

If a student's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the student's parent.

Where a student has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the student from the admission register following approval of a completed CME if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the student after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.

The school will communicate openly and honestly with students and their families about their expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

The school will liaise with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call on staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

8. Attendance register

The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether students are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site educational activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- S = Study leave
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- W = Work experience
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Student not on admission register
- # = Planned whole or partial school closure

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant students who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example, induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

9. Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding

If they are persistently absent, students will be referred to the Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that early intervention is delivered quickly to address absence.

The Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of students and to implement attendance procedures.

10. Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day will start at 8.10am; students should be in their classroom at this time.

Registers are marked by 8.15am; students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time; and arrive between 8.15-8.35

Students arriving after 8.35am will receive a detention. The register closes at 9.30am; students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

11. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of students, and understand the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

All students will be expected to be in their classes by 8:10am and 1:45pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.

Any student with permission to leave the school for part of the day will be required to sign out at the school reception and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting.

If truancy is suspected, the Executive Headteacher will be notified and they will contact the student's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the student not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the student, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

12. Missing children

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have the appropriate permission from the school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing during the school day:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform the Executive Headteacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Executive Headteacher
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted
- If the student has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the student will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted

- The missing student's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the student going missing

If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

When the student has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the student to ensure they are safe and well.

The Executive Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the student understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located.

The Executive Headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

13. Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- During Year 7 when a student is settling into the school, unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a student's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a student's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice.

14. Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.

Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong.

15. Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Where this is not possible, parents will be required to send a note and appointment card to the school office.

If the appointment requires the student to leave during the school day, the student must be signed out at the school office by a parent.

Students will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16. Young carers

The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

The school will take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

17. Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a student is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent is not available and the student's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the student from attending.
- The student is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

18. Monitoring and review

The school will monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

The school's attendance target is 95 percent each year.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher and the Head of Pastoral Care and Safeguarding.

Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2024

