



Attendance Policy

Christian Values

St. Leonard's is a Church of England School. All policies implemented across the school support the creation of a learning culture which celebrates our Christian ethos and core values of Love, Respect and Responsibility.

Rationale

At St. Leonard's School we care about our pupils. Regular attendance has a direct effect on the results and successes of each individual pupil.

Regular attendance means that the children will:

- Benefit from all the opportunities we provide for them at school.
- Have uninterrupted learning.
- Develop and maintain relationships and friendships with fellow pupils and teachers.

Aims

1. To provide clear guidelines about how the school promotes and attains high levels of pupil attendance.
2. to achieve a 95% + attendance rate
3. to promote partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
4. to involve other agencies when all possible school based supportive measures have been put in place.

Procedures for implementation

Expectations of pupils:

- They will attend school regularly, aiming for full attendance.
- They will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- They will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

Expectations of parents:

- They will ensure their children attend school, aiming for full attendance.
- They will contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical (ie by 9.00am) whenever their child is unable to attend
- That any absence is followed by an explanation of why the child was absent and for what period of time if it is more than one day
- To ensure that their child arrives in school, on time, and well prepared for the school day
- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- To arrange medical appointments out of school hours and in holidays whenever possible
- To refrain from taking the child out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances

Expectations of school:

- To communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance

- To give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted
- To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance / absence
- To make contact with parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend
- To refer to appropriate support agencies as required

Expectations of governors:

- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Head Teacher reports
- To support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modelling
- To communicate with parents and other agencies as appropriate

School Procedures related to attendance:

Registration

- Registration periods are 8.40 – 8.50am. (The Nursery morning class starts at 8:30am, and will register by 8:45 am. The Nursery afternoon class starts at 12:15pm and will register by 12:30pm)
- Registers will be completed during these periods and returned to the office at the end of registration
- Registers will be completed using the codes identified in Appendix A
- If no information regarding the absence of a child has been received by 9.00am, the office will telephone the parent to check the reason for absence
- If there is no initial reason given for the absence, or letter of explanation on the child's return, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The decision to authorise an absence is taken by the Headteacher, following statutory requirements and the school's policy on attendance.

Authorised absence

- Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from the parents that the child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence and a note of confirmation on the child's return if the absence is longer than one day
- If the child has a medical appointment with the doctor or dentist that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Regular absences for medical reasons will be raised as a concern with parents. Parents must request the period of absence or inform the school in advance.
- If the absence has been requested and approved in line with the school procedures then this will be an authorised absence.

An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents give a reason, if the absences are persistent or inappropriate. In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school will request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.

Unauthorised absence

Absences will not be authorised if the following occur:

- Unexplained absence
- Absence for a shopping trip or looking after a younger child at home
- A holiday
- Any absence that is not considered to be as the result of extenuating circumstances.

If a pupil has failed to attend school for 4 school days without explanation then the school will make a referral to the Early Intervention Hub using the Hub referral form, who will carry out a home visit as a first step before referring to the Pupil Tracking Officer if necessary. If parents inform the school that a child has left but there is no contact from a new school within four weeks (including moving abroad), then the school will make a referral to the Pupil Tracking Officer following the advice in the OCC Children Missing Education Policy 2013-16. **In all cases a child should not be removed from roll unless his/her new educational provision has been confirmed.** If there are any concerns at all about the safety of children then the school's Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

Persistent lateness

If a child arrives after the register has closed at 8.50 am, the absence will be recorded as late. After 9.00 am it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with school to address the issues, the matter can be referred to the County Attendance Team, or the Home-School Community Link Worker, who may offer support. If there is still no improvement, a Penalty Fine could be issued.

Holiday absence

The law does not allow parents to take their children out of school during term time for a holiday. Legislation came into force in September 2013 which made it clear that Headteachers should not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. At St Leonard's we will consider authorising absence for the following exceptional circumstances: attending a funeral, hospital appointments and compassionate leave. In all instances a maximum of 2 days will be authorised as we strongly believe that being at school benefits children, even when there are difficult external circumstances.

The school will also consider requests for any educational activity eg ballet and music exams. Leave will not be granted for any filming or media work, whether unpaid or not.

If a request for exceptional leave is refused by the school the matter may be referred to the County Attendance Team who can issue a Penalty Fine.

The school will take into account previous attendance and if there is a history of prior exceptional circumstances when deciding if an absence can be authorised.

Response to non attendance:

- If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by parents.
- Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will post a letter to the parents/carers requesting information regarding the absence.
- The government recognises attendance that is below 90% as being Persistently Absent. If a child's attendance slips below 90%, the school will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the Head Teacher will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Home-School Community Link Worker.
- If a child is repeatedly late, the school will initially write to parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the Head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Home-School Community Link Worker.
- Where attendance continues to be below 90% and does not improve parents will be invited to a Parenting Contract meeting.
- In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved through a Parenting Contract, the school will refer the matter formally to the County Attendance Team and, where necessary, legal proceedings will be instigated.
- Where the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will follow the advice in the OCC Children Missing Education Policy 2013-16.
- In all instances where a child is absent from school for more than 7 school days parents will be texted on the 8th day requesting them to attend an attendance meeting upon the child's return. At this meeting doctor's medical notes will be requested and if there is no medical reason for the absence then parents will be requested to enter into a Parenting Contract as above.

Legal proceedings

The Education Act 1996, Section 444 and the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23, gives powers to the Local Authority to initiate a range of legal procedures if parents/carers fail to ensure an appropriate education for their child/ren. These procedures include a Penalty Fine, an Education Supervision Order,

Parenting Order or prosecution which could result in a fine, unpaid work in the community and in extreme cases a term of imprisonment.

Incentives for good attendance:

- A sticker for 95%+ attendance and 100% attendance will be given out at the end of each term with an additional certificate for the whole year at the end of term 6.
- A certificate for improved attendance will be given as appropriate.
- The class achieving the best weekly and termly attendance in each Key Stage will receive a trophy. The termly winners also receive a governors' award of £50 to spend upon a treat for their class.
- Reasons for regular attendance and arriving on time, well prepared for school will be raised in assemblies and PHSCE sessions
- Parents will receive reports on their child's level of attendance at Parent Consultations

Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness

- Attendance data will be checked termly (six times) by the Senior Leadership Team to identify any issues and trends
- Attendance will be discussed at regular staff meetings where staff have the opportunity to express any concerns
- The school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the termly attendance % against their overall target for the end of the year

Summary

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

- a 95% + attendance rate
- a positive partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
- clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders

Date of Ratification: October 2016

Signed..... (Chair of Governors)

Signed..... (Headteacher)

(Please also see OCC Children Missing Education Policy 2013-2016)