



WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

The County Attendance Team Education, Sufficiency & Access

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

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.

Introduction

St Leonard's is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C, I, M, B, P, J, R), unauthorised (O, G) or as an approved educational activity (V, W) (attendance out of school). These codes are available on www.gov.uk as approved by the Government.
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **8.40am**, except in the Nursery morning class which starts at 8.30am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of **15 minutes**.
2. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as Late (L) in the register. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.
3. Arrivals which are 30 minutes after the close of the register will be recorded as an absence for that session ie attendance after 9.25am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence in the morning (U).
4. The afternoon registration will be 12:15pm in the Nursery afternoon class, 12.30pm in Reception, 12.45pm in Year One and 1.00pm in Year Two. In Lower Key Stage Two it is 1.10pm and in Upper Key Stage Two it is 1.20pm. The registers will close 10 minutes after these times.
5. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

Absence from School

First Day Absence

- Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day.
- Parents are expected to contact the school as soon as possible, and latest by 9.00am, whenever their child is unable to attend. This should be for every day of absence unless a doctor's note has specified a particular period of absence.
- If no information regarding the absence of a child has been received by 9.00am, the office will text the parent to check the reason for absence, If no response is received the school will telephone using the contact list provided by parents.
- An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents give a reason, if the absences are persistent or inappropriate.

Third Day Absence

- Where there has been no response or explanation from parents, the office will text again requesting them to contact school that day with information regarding the absence. If no reason has been given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.

Continuing Absence

- In all instances where a child is absent from school for a whole week the headteacher will be informed. On the 8th day of absence parents will be texted 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 if overall attendance is below 90%.
- **Pupil Missing Education**
Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 10 consecutive school days and the school are unable to make contact with the family must be referred to the Locality and Community Support Service to conduct a home visit.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence, if received, should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of class teachers and the office staff to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/carers. The Headteacher will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward which could lead to a Parenting Contract.

In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school will seek permission to request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.

Safeguarding

Persistent absence without explanation is potentially a safeguarding concern. If there are any concerns at all about the safety of a child then the school Safeguarding Policy will be followed. The Designated Senior Lead should be informed immediately if a child on a Child Protection Plan is absent.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

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

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- **they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;**
- **they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;**
- **they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;**
- **their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. **If sustained, it is the equivalent of missing one whole school year of education by Year Ten.**

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a Parenting Contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders,

education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/School agreement summarises attendance responsibilities.

Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question, using the school form. At St Leonard's we will consider authorising absence for the following exceptional circumstances only: **attending a funeral, hospital appointments and compassionate leave**. 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.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. 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. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance

- A sticker for 96%+ attendance and 100% attendance will be earned at the end of each term with an additional reward for full attendance for the whole year at the end of term 6.
- A certificate for improved attendance may be given as appropriate.
- Children with known medical conditions will be allowed to miss one session per year for an approved medical appointment without jeopardising their 100% attendance
- The class achieving the best weekly attendance in Key Stage One will win Attendance Ted for a week and in Key Stage Two will receive the Attendance Trophy.
- The termly winners 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 and in end of year Annual Reports

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school's target for this academic year is:

96%

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This policy has been approved by:

Headteacher:

Chair of Governors:

Date:

Date to be reviewed: