



# Attendance Policy

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## Introduction

Leasowes High School, an academy within the Invictus Education Trust, is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend every day and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Leasowes High School is committed to the provision of a full, rich and appropriate education for all of its students and acknowledges that education is vital to raising the aspirations and achievements of all students.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## HTLC Attendance Statement

In Halesowen we are proud of the work we do with our pupils. We want all of our pupils to learn in a high quality, happy and secure environment. We recognise that attendance and punctuality is paramount in raising standards and pupil attainment.

All of our schools follow the DfE guidance 2016 which states:

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;

Parents to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

The DfE guidance also states:

- Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstance.

**Halesowen schools cannot grant leave of absence for family holidays, unless it is deemed truly exceptional circumstance. This applies to siblings who attend different Halesowen schools.**

## The Law relating to attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 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'

## The Law relating to safeguarding:

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015 – updated 2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)
- Dudley Safeguarding Childrens Board Safeguarding Procedures

### **Aims and Objectives**

- Leasowes High School's aims and objectives drive our commitment to establish and maintain levels of attendance at a rate comparable and above the recommendation from OfSTED and inline with the schools motto of Aspire and Achieve.
- You and your child have an important part to play in ensuring that we achieve our targets and remain a school that ensure our students take full advantage of their educational opportunities by regular, punctual attendance at school.
- We will ensure that our policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective and applied consistently in practice.
- We will ensure that registers are completed accurately, to provide reliable data, which will be used to identify those students whose attendance level is likely to impact on their ability to fulfil their potential and achieve their predicted attainment level.
- We will ensure that any student, who has reached or is at risk of moving towards the national Persistent Absence level of 90% and below, is given priority. We will target our resources to identify barriers to these students' school attendance and ensure students and parents are supported to find a resolution.
- We will ensure that we promote a whole-school approach to the management of attendance, with all members of the school community committed to their role and confident of their ability to make an effective and positive contribution to all students.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **School Governors**

- Will ensure there is a named Governor to serve as the Designated Member with responsibility for attendance – Lynn Sherwood
- Will ensure that there is a standing item on the agenda of termly full meetings of the Governing Body to continually review attendance.
- Will ensure the regular review of this Policy and Procedures and play an active part in the whole school community
- Will, in conjunction with the Headteacher, set realistic but challenging targets for improvements in school attendance.

The school will operate a “Whole School Policy” for the Management of Attendance and in order that School procedures are efficiently and effectively implemented, the following members of staff will undertake the following responsibilities.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- **Headteacher & Chair of Governors**
- **Natalie Wills– Assistant Headteacher**

All educational establishments must keep two registers of students. The Admissions Register, which records the personal details of every student at the school, and the Attendance Register which records every student’s attendance at every session the school is open to students.

The Registers are governed by and shall comply with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

The Headteacher and the Chair of Governors hold overall responsibility for the contents and maintenance of the Admissions and Attendance Registers and the overall management of attendance.

The Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors may delegate some or all of these responsibilities.

However, it remains their overall responsibility and to ensure that absence is a standing agenda item for discussion with school governors, and they are appraised by the delegated members of staff as to the condition of the registers and the coding.

At Leasowes High School there is a team of leaders who have been delegated with the responsibility to analyse student absence data, decide appropriate intervention strategies and allocate cases for Pastoral Support Managers & Attendance officer to action. The Attendance officer is Andrea Coppage who will support the allocation of cases.

The Attendance officer will maintain overall responsibility for the outcomes of all cases allocated and have a responsibility to ensure an appropriate level of supervision is maintained with the Pastoral Support Managers and Attendance officer to ensure that the required actions are being taken and recorded.

SLT will ensure through appropriate supervision with the Headteacher that the following is applied through policy and procedure:

- That when any student subject to a Child Protection Plan, or where there are Safeguarding concerns, is absent, the circumstances are reviewed with Natalie Wills (DSL) and Claire McAleavey (Dep DSL) and the outcome recorded and any actions agreed are prioritised.
- That early intervention is assured when individual student absence gives cause for concern in accordance with schools policies and procedures.
- That any student who has been identified with long term medical related issues and where absence has been authorised is reviewed at least once every 2 school weeks with a Pastoral Support Manager, Attendance officer and SLT.

- That clear and challenging attendance targets are set and that timelines and expectations for parents, students and school in resolving attendance issues are identified and recorded.
- That when making any referral to the Education Investigation Service (EIS) that the EIS criteria is met and that referrals are appropriately detailed in terms of student/parent detail and Schools action prior to referral.
- That a detailed report on attendance issues is relayed to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.
- The frequency of such reports to be will be termly unless asked for specifically by the Headteacher/Chair of Governors.
- That regular data is sent to form tutors/Heads of Year/SLT/governors to show improvement, intervention and actions.
- That all members of staff are managed to adhere to policy and procedure, and the fair and consistent implementation of this across the whole School in their dealings with students and parents
- That appropriate action is taken to decide, agree and inform when previously authorised absences have accrued to a level at which the school will no longer authorise any further absences. This will be at 10 sessions of authorised absence in one period of time or in separate absences.
- That there is full and up to date awareness of all students who may become or are Persistent Absentees (90% and below)
- That a regular review of the late book is undertaken and that Policies and Procedures around lateness are followed to improve punctuality.
- That they liaise directly with the EIS around all removals of students from Roll.

### **Form Tutors**

Form Tutors are responsible for marking the Attendance Registers in accordance with the registration system and guidelines employed by the school. They are to mark the registers with P, L or O. No other code must be added. Any letters or absence notes must be forwarded to the attendance officer.

### **Operational Team**

- **Attendance officer**
- **Pastoral Support Managers**

### **Attendance officer – Andrea Coppage**

There is one dedicated member of staff who will generate reports for a variety of staff within the school on a weekly basis; the reports will be reviewed by pastoral staff to ensure that the appropriate intervention either at individual level or at whole school level is taken, they will also:

- Andrea Coppage will produce absence reports on a daily basis that will identify the parents / carers to contact by telephone on the every day of a student's absence and to establish the reason for that absence, unless the parent/carer has contacted the school directly.
- To send a message via text to the parents/ Carers to highlight further absence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day.
- To call parent/ carers between 7.45 – 8.30am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of absence to ascertain if the student will be attending school
- To identify when there are 5 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence recorded for any student and to alert the Pastoral Support Managers and Heads of Year.
- Andrea Coppage will keep under review all students whose attendance is 90% and below and meet regularly with SLT for individual action required. This will include writing to parents when a child's attendance becomes a concern with a warning, inviting parents into school for meetings, SLT will then inform the governing body if further action is to be taken.
- To agree / confirm or seek guidance as to if any reason given for absence can be accepted for the 'authorisation' of the absence.
- To assert that School are under no obligation to authorise any absence without appropriate detail, information or in some cases 'evidence', including medical.

### **Pastoral Support Managers**

At Leasowes High School there are three Pastoral Support Managers who are responsible for and will undertake a variety of support. This may be by telephone contact, individual interventions, student support, identification and assessment of needs, home visits, letters and challenging parents around their responsibilities to ensure attendance.

Rachel Dixon, Pastoral Support Manager, has a specific role for supporting attendance. Her roles include:

- Supporting with phone calls to parents/ carers between 7.45 - 8.30am
- Making home visits
- Completing referrals to Early Help as needed
- Meeting with parents/ carers to improve attendance of individual students
- To support the attendance officer with specific duties

All interventions and contacts with parents must be documented; detail the intervention carried out, and recorded within the student's file, contemporaneous notes will be

maintained at all times within an effective recording system for court evidence if needed.

All correspondence must be an 'original' copy which has been photocopied and retained on file to support any criminal or family court proceedings by the EIS.

### **Standard Operating Procedures**

- A parent/carer should phone the school or leave an email if their child is absent. If this is not done when registers are checked with daily absence lists Andrea Coppage will phone home.
- On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of absence a text will be sent to the parent/carers (number 1 on the contact list).
- By the 5<sup>th</sup> session the Pastoral Support Manager will follow up with a home visit and letter sent home.
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> session of absence a further home visit and follow up letter.
- A child with regular non or poor attendance shall be invited into school for a meeting with pastoral support manager and attendance officer.
- Any Action Plan and/or Recommendations must be in writing to those with Parental Responsibility in letter form and on school headed paper, with the date, parents/carers names and address, student's name, DOB, the date of any follow up or review and a signature block.
- Where the needs of the student and family can be met by the school (as a universal service) ensure that the relevant support is identified, provided and outcomes recorded.
- Where any additional needs have been identified beyond that which can be met by the school and where other agency support may be required the Early Help Assessment (Dudley) shall be offered and followed.
- Referrals can be made to the Education Investigation Service. This information will be can be found in the EIS section of the policy.
- Attendance officer to be responsible for cross referencing student attendance at Alternative Educational Providers.
- To ensure effective tracking of these students and that the schools registers are a true account of their attendance, this should be done at least once a week.

### **Students**

#### **Are expected to;**

- Attend School punctually and on a regular basis appropriately dressed (in accordance with School policy) and prepared for the school day
- Co-operate with members of staff with any issues relating to their attendance.

- Report any issues of concern with other students to Form Tutors

## **Parents and Carers**

### **Are expected to;**

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually every day it is open.
- Ensure that they contact the school prior to 09.30 am on the first day of absence; provide a reason for their child's absence and the expected length of time it is anticipated that the student will be absent.
- Confirm the reason for the student's absence in writing on the first day on which he/she returns to school (and keep this on student's file)
- Appreciate that the reason given for absence may not lead to the authorisation of the absence.
- Be prepared to provide further information or detail to support the parental view that their child was unfit to attend school. This could be a medical appointment card or medication that can be verified by the school nurse. In rare cases, a letter from the GP may be required.
- Ensure that, unless absolutely necessary, any medical or dental appointments in respect of their child are made outside school hours but where such school-time appointments are made that evidence is provided to school staff. Parents should ensure that wherever possible, students attend school before and return to school following medical appointments.
- Ensure they are contactable should their child be taken ill during the school day, and make appropriate arrangements to collect or have their child collected from reception.
- Ensure they keep school up to date with changes to contact details including mobile phone numbers and addresses. School will write home if contact details are deemed incorrect.
- Co-operate fully with school staff and respond to all calls and correspondence from school and/or officers of the Local Authority and/or Education Investigation Service in relation to the attendance of their child/ren

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Registration**

- A member of school staff is required to mark the registers at the beginning of the morning session and for the afternoon session, this is a legal requirement.
- Only codes identified in the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 can be used.



- Individual members of staff are responsible for the security of the register/electronic folders used to mark the registers and should follow the school's policy in this regard
- In respect of supply staff, they are required to mark the registers manually on documentation provided and return them to the administrative staff to update the electronic register.
- The school's register opens at 08.35am and closes at 08.40 Monday to Friday for all students.
- All students arriving after 8.40am but before 9.30am will be marked as late ('L' Code)
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors are legally responsible for the keeping of the Admissions and Attendance Registers and for ensuring any removal of a student from Roll complies with the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006.

### **Managing Lateness**

- Registers are marked in accordance with the above and if a student is marked late before registration closes the register shall be marked with the coding "L".
- All students arriving after 9.30am will be marked as unauthorised absence ('U' Code).
- The school will implement procedures for tackling poor punctuality through sanctions within school and parental engagement including the use of the Aspire module for losing points for lateness and detentions.

### **Managing Holidays/Leave of Absence**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's learning as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking students out of school during the academic year. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law, to time off in school time to go on holiday. The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 No 756 Clarification state that leave of absence shall not be granted by schools unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Leasowes High School operates a '**no leave**' policy. All applications for leave in the school year will only be authorised for special/exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Head teacher). All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at **least five school days prior to the requested leave date**. Any decision made by school will be confirmed to parents/ carers in writing.

On any occasion that a school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/ carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a G (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register. Failure to notify and/or request leave of

absence in term time, providing at least five day notice will result in all absence being recorded as O (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

Should parents/ carers proceed with a term time holiday contrary to this policy, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised holiday and will result in referral to the Education Investigation Service for their consideration to enforcement proceedings which could include a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per child and per parent/ carer or prosecution in the Magistrates court.

### **Managing Reintegration**

- From time to time it is necessary to reintegrate students back into school who have been experiencing problems and the school will decide if this is appropriate or not.
- Reintegration is only to be applied for a fixed amount of time and will not exceed a six week period unless; there is medical evidence to support further extension.
- All reintegration will be reviewed throughout the period it is in place and the school will be able to evidence the increase in hours the student is expected to attend

### **Managing Illness during the school day**

- If a student is unwell or has an accident and is considered unfit to continue in school then parent/s will be informed for the student to be collected. This will be done through the use of the school nurse (or first aider in their absence)
- Students are not allowed to make their own way home, they must be collected by a parent/carer or other an appropriate adult as agreed between a parent/carer and school.
- In exceptional cases the emergency services may be summoned by school should no contact be made with a parent/carer or if there is any delay in the parent/carer arriving to collect a student from school, or if the best interests or welfare of the student requires this. In such cases parents/carers will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

### **Education Off Site (including Greenhill Alternative Learning Campus)**

- On occasions students may be involved in educational activities off the school Campus, (i.e. sport, residential, field trips etc.) If students fail to attend for offsite activities they will be deemed as absent and the register will reflect this as unauthorised absence. This may result in referral to the Education Investigation Service
- School will maintain very close liaison with all of the Alternative Educational Providers with whom students are placed and monitor attendance at such establishments on a weekly basis including Greenhill.
- The school's registers will reflect actual attendance or otherwise at the alternative providers, including Greenhill being given their own form groups through the Schools MIS to support monitoring and action.

### **Off Rolling Students who have ceased to attend school**

- **School's Safeguarding Policy / Responsibilities must be adhered to.**
- No student shall be removed from the School Roll without agreement and a confirmatory email from the EIS, unless, that students whereabouts, Safeguarding and future educational provision have been confirmed and can be evidenced through the MIS.
- If information is received by school which suggests that a student has moved away from the area and / or is not returning to school then any and all detail possible needs to be gathered as to the students whereabouts and parents contact details.
- Such information may be sufficient for the student to be tracked by the EIS or Children Missing Education Team and for the EIS to agree a date for the student to be removed from the School Roll (which can be backdated).
- School must record all absences as unauthorised until confirmation to Remove from Roll is received from the EIS.
- School must keep an accurate record in relation to the 'Electronic School Leavers Report' and where possible identify their location
- If at any time after Referral School is made aware of any information suggesting the student may have moved away this should be passed to the EIS immediately.
- Removal from Roll agreement and confirmation as detailed above will follow accordingly.

***The following information is from Dudley EIS from 26 February 2018:***

- *A new referral form is now available for education providers, replacing the existing Children Missing from Education and "Regulation 8" referrals. The Local Authority no longer needs to be notified of children moving from one school to another. In this case the responsibility is placed on the previous school to contact the new school to ensure the child has arrived and to arrange transfer of the Common Transfer Form (CTF) and any Safeguarding information (including CPOMS file transfer). If the previous school is unable to confirm that the child has arrived at the new school, then a referral form can be completed and shared with EIS.*

**The Education Investigation Service**

Where student's attendance and/or punctuality is causing concern, the School will engage support from the Education Investigation Service, via a Referral, to carry out statutory intervention in cases of irregular attendance which may lead to formal proceedings against parents/ carers.

Penalty notices will be given for the following:

- At least 10 continuous sessions of unauthorised absence coded on the attendance certificate as “G”. Absences must have happened in the 4 (calendar) weeks prior to referral.
- At least 12 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period – no more than 24 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period. Absences must have happened in the 4 (calendar) weeks prior to referral.

For Tier 3 / 4 statutory intervention referrals there should be a minimum of 24 sessions of unauthorised absence over a 12 week period stipulated by the school. All parents/carers of the children will be considered as part of the statutory intervention. This definition in Education Law (Section 576, Education Act 1996) of a parent is:

- a) Someone with parental responsibility of a child (ie. Name is on the child’s birth certificate) AND/OR
- b) Someone who has the day to day care of the child (during or related to the period of absence)

The School must ensure they write to all parents concerned for statutory intervention.