

Luckington Community School

Attendance Policy 2024 - 26



"Learning, Living, Laughing"

Date Reviewed	Date Ratified	Next Review
August 2024	September 2024	August 2026
Related policies Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, Child Not Collected Protocol, Admissions, SEND policy and Behaviour Policy		

Our School Values are;

**Respect, Resilience, Honesty, Positivity, Compassion, Forgiveness and
Reflectiveness**

Rational

At Luckington Community Primary School we understand that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. School is the foundation for preparing children and young people for life as adults.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school and punctually. Parents and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and that the best outcomes for pupils will be achieved when all parties work together to secure excellent attendance.

This policy represents our commitment to support pupils to achieve 100% attendance. We wish for all our pupils, including those below compulsory school age (reception), to attend school 100% of the time.

It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies to improve attendance and the benefits of good attendance. The sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed.

This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published biannually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Introduction

In February 2024 the DfE published new guidance "**Working Together to Improve School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities**". The guidance is now statutory, effective from 19 August 2024.

The guidance is clear that improving attendance is everybody's business. It provides a framework that local authorities, schools, governing bodies and trusts must have regard to in order to support and maintain high levels of school attendance.

"Recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare." **Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE February 2024**

At Luckington, we believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

At Luckington School we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through newsletters and the website
- Include attendance information in reports about your child's performance in school and how any absence may be affecting their attainment
- Work with you and your child to achieve maximum attendance

At Luckington School we expect:

- Pupils to arrive at school every day on time
- Parents to work with the school to ensure that their child attends

Attendance: The legal Framework - Roles and Responsibilities

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents this means registering their child at a school. Failure to do so can result in the local authority (LA) taking action to secure attendance.

To avoid this happening, we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance.

By law, schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session (at Luckington this is 9am), and at the start of the afternoon session (1:15pm at Luckington).

The school also has to report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for 10 consecutive school days or more without known reason.

Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. All other absences are unauthorised.

Partnership working - Roles and Responsibilities

Do you know these facts about absence and attendance?

- Research suggests that a pupil who misses 17 days of school a year will drop 1 GCSE grade in attainment (DfE)
- 95% attendance equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year
- 90% attendance equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year
- 85% attendance equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year
- 80% attendance equates to one whole day off every week in a school year
- A secondary age pupil whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school.

"Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education." The National Audit Office (2005)

At Luckington school, attendance is the business of everyone in our school community.

The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

We expect that parents and carers will work with us if school absence becomes a concern.

Parents and carers can help to promote positive attendance by:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time, before registers close, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (ie not too tired or too hungry) and with the right equipment for the day
- Working in partnership with us to help their child(ren) gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with us to take an active interest in their child's education
- Working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance
- Not taking their children out of school during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Not taking their children out of school early unless it is an exceptional circumstance.

Procedures

Our school attendance target, set by the governing board, is 96%.

This means that we are expecting each pupil to have 100% attendance. Pupils who miss just 3 days of school in a school year will contribute to the school not achieving this attendance target.

At Luckington, the morning registration period is 8:45 am - 9:00 am. The register will take place at 9:00 am for the morning session and at 1:15pm for the afternoon session. This means that each day at school equates to two sessions.

Children of either class, arriving after 9:00 am, will need to arrive through the front door rather than directly in the classroom. Any child who arrives after the register has been taken but before 9:05am, will be marked as L for late. Any child who arrives after 9:05am will be marked as U - Late after register closes. Please note that pre-agreed appointments (i.e. medical appointments) should be discussed in advance (where possible) with the class teacher and the child will be registered with the appropriate register code.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised absence. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken. We are required to ask for a reason for lateness after the register closes to record on the register.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

- A pupil has a regular pattern of absence
- A pupil's attendance falls below our target of 96% (from term 3 onwards)
- A pupil has more than 3 weeks where they haven't achieved full attendance in a term (in Wiltshire there are 6 terms in an academic year)
- A pupil has more than 4 recorded lates in a term

Parents are asked to:

- **Notify the school** when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, **on the first and subsequent days of absence**. Parents should make contact with school before the start of the school day (before 9am).
- Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school
- Arrange medical or dental appointments **outside of school hours** unless there is urgent need for an appointment.
- Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival.
- **Not take holidays in term time.**
- Only request leave of absence in term time if it is for an **exceptional circumstance**. The process for requesting leave of absence is explained further in this policy.

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent and the parent/carer has not advised that the child will not be in school. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an unnotified absence. The admin and finance officer will initially phone parents within 30 minutes of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers then we will make contact with nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff, to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.

Collecting your child from school

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3:15pm. If parents are unable to collect their child as usual then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school.

We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of. Please be aware that this is a non-negotiable system that we have in place for safeguarding reasons.

Child not collected from school procedure

If a child is not collected by a parent or carer, this will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- The DSL will make sure every effort is made to contact the parent or carer or named alternative carer as per the child's school records for up to 30 minutes from the end of the school day. This might include speaking to known friends or neighbours of the parents where appropriate.

- If no contact is made, the DSL will arrange for staff to either visit his/her home address (within one hour of the end of the school day), depending on the child's individual needs and circumstances. The DSL will ensure the child has adequate supervision at all times.

When the above procedure has been followed and the child has still not been reunited with a parent or carer:

- If the child is known to children's social care, the DSL will contact the child's allocated social worker or the Emergency Duty Service (EDS) if it is out of normal office hours.
- If the child is not known to social care, the DSL will consult with the Integrated Front Door (IFD) previously called the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or the EDS for advice. The school will provide the IFD/EDS with the following information about the child:
 - o Name(s), date of birth and address
 - o Gender, ethnicity, religion, language spoken
 - o Any additional needs – dietary, SEN, behavioural difficulties, medical
 - o Any current or previous child protection concerns
 - o Any previous significant or pattern of incidents of not being collected from school

The parent (and alternative carers):

- o Name/s
- o Address/es
- o Telephone numbers – mobile, home, work

The DSL will record and review any incident when a child is not picked up by parents or picked up late (when no reasonable explanation is given) as part of the school safeguarding and child protection processes.

Social Care/ Police procedure

EDS or IFD will advise the DSL of the next steps. This may include carrying out appropriate checks with partner agencies such as the Police and make further attempts to contact the parent/carer.

If a member of staff thinks a child is at risk of significant harm, is injured, or abandoned, they will contact

- the Integrated Front Door (IFD) on **0300 4560108**
 - 8.45am-5pm, Monday-Thursday and
 - 8.45am-4pm Friday
- out of hours Emergency Duty Service (EDS) on **0845 6070 888**
- if there is immediate danger, phone the police or emergency services on **999**.

Monitoring attendance

Weekly monitoring of the registers will be made by the Headteacher, to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), Severe Absence (SA) and patterns and levels of broken weeks, lateness, authorised absence and unauthorised absence and reasons for absence.

A pupil is classed as a PA when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year and SA if they miss more than 50% of schooling, for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a pupil by creating gaps in his or her learning.

The Headteacher will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially we will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an attendance meeting with the headteacher, however, if the pattern continues the school may make a referral to the Local Authority for interventions that may include penalty notices (see the section on consequences of persistent and severe absence).

Requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education guidance, leave of absence from school, may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Please note: absences for the purpose of a holiday are no longer considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form (Appendix A) which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested. A leave of absence request form is attached to this policy.

Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require 1 week notice unless the absence is related to an emergency.

We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.

Requests will be considered by the headteacher and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.

Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school.

Parents will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

Consequences of persistent and severe absence

At Luckington school we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns.

If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority where possible actions include:

1) The National Framework for Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has issued a National Framework for Penalty Notices for School Absences, 'The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024' which govern how and when penalty notices may be used.

All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

Unauthorised absence can relate to;

- A. a holiday in term time
- B. an unexplained absence
- C. a pupil being late after the register closes

Holiday Related Absence

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period as a result of a holiday taken in term time, the absence **will** be notified to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Unexplained absence or a pupil being late after the register closes

Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time we may issue you with a **Notice to Improve**, and invite you to a School Attendance Meeting (SAM). This will provide you with an opportunity to engage with support to improve your child's attendance. If support is not working then we **will** refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice to you.

Please note: One session equates to half a day.

Penalty Notices

If the school has notified the Local Authority due to unauthorised absences as listed above, each parent can receive a penalty notice for each child that has an unauthorised absence. For example 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices (two for each child). If a child is persistently late and the notice to improve hasn't been adhered to then both parents will receive a penalty notice.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3 year period.

The first penalty notice issued in respect of an individual child will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued in respect of the same child within 3 years shall be in the sum of £160.

If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

2) Court Action: The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

Or

3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Strategies for improving and maintaining good attendance

At this school we take every opportunity to promote excellent attendance for all pupils.

We are a caring school community where the needs of all pupils are carefully considered. Our school provides and promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that pupils feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

If there are specific issues which might impact on your child's attendance it is important that you talk to us so that we can support you and your child. Our parent support advisor may also be able to help.

There may be times when we ask other agencies to become involved to help us understand and work with you to encourage regular school attendance. (eg Wiltshire Council, school health, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Advisory Service, Medical Needs Reintegration Service). If we feel that this would be helpful we will discuss it with you first.

We are very keen to listen to the views of children and parents with regard to attendance matters and we welcome any feedback which helps us to shape how we work with families to address attendance issues and reward excellent attendance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The attendance policy will be reviewed every two years by governors and school staff to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community.

We will ensure that the policy reflects current DfE and Local Authority guidance so that parents may be assured of the standards that we strive to achieve.

Communicating the contents of this policy

All new parents are introduced to the policy and information on attendance in the school prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.

School attendance will feature in the school newsletter and we will advise parents of any changes to policy and procedures.

Our policy is available in other languages if required.

APPENDIX A - Leave Of Absence Request Form



Luckington Primary School
The Green
Luckington
Wiltshire
SN14 6NU

Headteacher: Julie Gingell
e-mail: admin@luckington.wilts.sch.uk
Phone: 01666 840297

Use this form to request absence for an exceptional circumstance in advance of the absence. Please note that holidays in term time are no longer considered an exceptional circumstance and are always unauthorised.

Please also refer to the attendance policy which details the criteria for being issued with a penalty notice for holiday absences.

You do not need to complete this form for medical appointments - please just inform the office of these in advance, unless it is an emergency appointment.

Name of child/ren			
Date of first day of proposed absence	Date of proposed return to school	Number of days of the proposed absence	
Full details of the circumstances leading to this request			
Date and Signature			