



Lings Primary School

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

- To emphasise the importance of, and secure, maximum attendance at School to enable pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.
- To make explicit to all relevant parties the School's expectations for attendance levels.
- To promote a consistent approach across the School to all matters relating to attendance.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents, pupils) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are authorised.
- To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

2. Attendance

Regular attendance at School is vital. Without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; absence results in missed learning.

It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at School. Irregular attendance results in pupils not fulfilling their true

potential, being placed at risk and being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Therefore we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils.

Attendance is a national priority and we submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high academic performance.

3. Acceptable absence

Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period. What is sought are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the pupil is marked present on all ten sessions); pupils should not have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the School.

4. Authorised absences

The Department for Children and Families (DCSF) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- when a child is ill or receiving medical attention;
- days of religious observance notified in advance;
- absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as "Approved Sporting Activity", that can be authorised and there are events affecting families,

some unforeseen, which necessitate absence from school and professional discretion is needed to be used in these cases about whether the absence can be authorised.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum: routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

5. Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carers;
- the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.
- the pupil is already on the attendance monitoring system and no evidence has been provided to the school to support the absence.

The DCSF guidelines state that the following activities would classify as unauthorised:

- minding the house;
- caring for relatives;
- awaiting repair people;
- shopping;
- a birthday or family celebration.
- Holiday

We ask parents to notify the School in writing, well in advance of any proposed special absence to ascertain whether the School would view the reason for absence as valid or not. Individual cases would need to be judged on their merits and fine judgements will have, on occasions, to be made.

The DCSF guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the School that judges whether an absence is authorised or not.

6. Holidays in term time

The DfE legislation states that no holiday taken in term time can be authorised. All holidays will be marked as unauthorised and could be subject to a fine of up to £60 if paid in 21 days or £120 if paid in 28 days. This fine is per child and per adult.

7. Home-School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the School and home to work closely together. Our expectations are in our Prospectus and the Home-School Agreement, and communicated in newsletters. To this end, we ask parents:

- to ensure their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon school;
- if their child is ill, to notify the school on the first day by 9.00am with an estimation of the likely length of absence;
- to provide a written note on the first day the child returns to school, which is kept for our records and authenticates the telephone message;
- to inform the school at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school;

8. Procedures

The School:

- contacts home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home by 9.15am
- contacts home and takes action promptly over any unexplained absences
- pursues promptly any concerns that parents provide that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in, school
- involves the support services to help pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances
- regularly and consistently reminds pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- rewards good or improving attendance.

9. Attendance data provided to Class teachers

Daily classes are checked for non-attending pupils and throughout the school year, Class teachers are provided with attendance data for each pupil upon request. This information alerts class teachers all to pupils and families causing concern as well as providing us information for awards.

10. Awards for good attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance the School awards rewards for levels of attendance of 100%. A weekly class certificate and trophy is handed out in assembly. The overall winning class is given a reward treat, eg a day at the Saints Study Centre.

11. Lateness

Lateness is defined as arriving in the School building after the beginning of the morning or afternoon sessions. This is closely monitored and addressed with the parents by means of letters, monitoring and parent meetings.

12 Parent Contracts

Parents are offered a last chance to rectify attendance and or lateness issues by means of a parent contract. The parent contract is voluntary.

The contract is offered as a last step prior to being referred to The Education Entitlement Service for further legal action to be taken, which could result in a PACE interview being held under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. If convicted of an offence of failing to ensure regular attendance of your child at school under Section 444, 1 / 1A Education Act 1996, parents could be fined up to £2,500 and/or receive a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.

13. Staff Guide to Registers and Associated Procedures

13.1. Introduction

Registers are important legal documents and we rely on accurate completion in order to pursue any concerns as well as for data analysis.

13.2. Marking the Register

Class teachers are responsible for the initial enquiries about absences and communicating concerns to the Key Stage Leader, SENCO or Head Teacher.

It is imperative that the data entered is accurate. There should be a mark for every pupil. Staff should enter either 'present', 'absent' or 'late'. Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information recorded is accurate.

13.3. Reading the Registers

The Register data is read every morning and entered onto the Sims system by the Attendance Officer. The School operates a policy of first day response regarding absence.

13.4. The first day response procedure

- Registers are entered onto Sims and a daily printout is produced.
- classrooms are checked to establish if the children marked as absent have since arrived at School late and the reason noted.
- contact home and take action promptly over any unexplained absences
- record reason for absence on Sims or details of any messages or action taken
- communicate any issues / concerns to senior team at weekly meeting and decide the steps to take in each individual case.

Confirmatory Signatures

Signed.....**Head**
Teacher

Signed.....**Governor**

Approved on.....

To be reviewed on.....