

Lacey Green Primary Academy

Attendance Policy



Policy Reviewed and Agreed: September 2024

Lacey Green Primary Academy 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 work consistently 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.

Academy attendance is subject to various Education laws and this academy attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. Each year the Academy will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both National and Cheshire East attendance targets. The Academy will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

Academy Aims

Support for Pupils – To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum that provides children with the best possible learning opportunities and experiences

Ethos – To provide a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each pupil is valued and supported

Partnership – To build and maintain effective partnerships between the academy and its parental body, external support agencies and the wider community

The Academy's Expectations

From pupils:

- They will attend the academy regularly
- They will arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day

From parents:

- They ensure their children attend the academy everyday possible
- They contact the office between 8.15 & 8:40am whenever their child is unable to attend
- They ensure their child is appropriately dressed, taking account of the academy uniform policy
- They ensure their child arrives in the academy well prepared for the academy day with homework completed

Pupils and parents can expect the following from the Academy:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and time keeping
- Contact with parents when there is no apparent good reason for absence and there is a pattern of absences, or an excessive number of absences or lateness, school could ring / conduct a home visit as a welfare check in certain circumstances
- Immediate action on any problem notified to us, in confidence if necessary

Positive Measures to encourage excellent attendance

- Registers will be completed accurately twice daily
- Daily monitoring of registers – raising concerns where appropriate
- Parent Liaison Teacher – who contacts families and visits when required.

- Regular termly monitoring by the Principal on attendance and punctuality
- Discussion with the Principal where attendance falls below 90% or if there is any other cause for concern.

Procedures

Absence

Any child who is absent from the Academy at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of the academy]. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on the Principal's 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.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will:

- contact the parent by telephone
- email, telephone or message via Arbor the parent/carer requesting that they advise the academy of the reason for absence if no note is received upon the child's return to academy
- send follow-up letters until the reason for the absence is established
- invite the parents into the academy when attendance becomes a concern, unless other action is planned to identify and resolve the difficulties, which are preventing the pupil from attending the academy
- make parents/carers aware of the legal requirements regarding academy attendance
- help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to the academy after an absence of longer than six weeks.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the class teachers 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 academy will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful the academy will refer the case to the Education Family Support Worker from the Cheshire East Attendance and Children out of school service.

Absence Notes

Notes, app messages, emails or telephone calls received from parents explaining absence are logged on the school's computer system Arbor.

Parental Requests for Holidays During Term-Time

Principals no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) in a school year for family holiday or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin. Permission for family holidays in term time will not be granted except in **exceptional** circumstances. If granted, absence should not exceed ten sessions per year. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. There is no right to take a holiday in term time and you are **STRONGLY** advised not to book a holiday before discussing your exceptional circumstances with the Principal. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday or another reason which has not been agreed, this will be classified as unauthorised and you may be fined or legal action taken against you. Absence will not be authorised at critical periods in our academy calendar e.g. at the start of the academy year, during SAT periods, any test periods and in Year 6.

Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances may be requested by completing a Leave of Absence (LOA) form. The form can be downloaded from the school website or from the school office. You will then receive a copy of the form back informing you of the academy's decision. Following a request for leave parents may be called for interview with the Principal at his discretion.

Parents should be aware that leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively.

Each request for holiday absence will be considered individually. When making the decision the following factors will be considered:

- The amount of time requested
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record – it must be 95% and over
- Proximity to SATs, Phonics screening and any other examinations
- Length of the proposed leave
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances and reason for the request
- Frequency of the activity, and
- When the request was made

When leave of absence has been granted the absence will be recorded as authorised, using the appropriate register symbol.

If parents take a child out of school during term time without permission, or fail to apply for permission in advance of a holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using the appropriate register symbol. **If the Academy suspects time is being taken out of school during term time and no LOA request has been made, they may issue a 'Reason to believe letter' to parents and process a possible penalty notice.**

If the pupil is kept away for a period in excess of the time agreed with the academy the extra time will be treated as 'unauthorised' absence.

When a pupil is withdrawn during term time there is disruption to the learning process that can result in the pupil falling behind his/her group and can also affect relationships with friends.

Parents cannot expect work to be provided by the academy during their absence.

A child can be withdrawn from roll if they have been granted leave of absence in excess of ten academy days and fail to attend the academy within the ten academy days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was granted, and the Principal is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend the academy because of sickness or any unavoidable cause.

Extended trips Overseas during Term-Time

Extended leave of absence will be granted in exceptional circumstances only and each individual case will be considered on its merits.

Failure to return on the agreed date

When granting leave of absence for an extended trip overseas, we will ensure that we have a date when the pupil will return to the academy. See above for details of in what circumstances pupils may be removed from roll if they do not return by the agreed date.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Please refer to the Cheshire East Council Code of Conduct on Fixed Penalty Notices. ([Click Here](#))

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a „parent“, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred „biological parent“) but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school’s registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten sessions of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this Academy that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Principal, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Only the Principal or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Cheshire East Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

The National Framework for Penalty Notices Explained.

Penalty Notices will be issued for

Term time leave: Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period: A Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10 week period.

However, we retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

Per Parent/Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at: £160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

Children in Care

Penalty Notices will not be issued in respect of children in Local Authority Care, as other interventions will be used.

Punctuality and Lateness

We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in the academy on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day, but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching. All children who arrive in the academy after the register is called are to be marked as late.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **8.35am**. Children and parents can begin to come into school grounds from **8:25am**.
- Registers are taken at **8.40am**.
- Children arriving after **8.40am** are required to come into school via the school office only, where they or their parent/carer must sign in at the office into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded.
- At **8.45am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'L',
- After **8:50am** your child will receive a 'U' (Unauthorised Late absence) this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence; Please note that each unauthorised late will count towards the 10 sessions and once this threshold is reached the Academy will refer them to the Education Family Support Worker from the Cheshire East Attendance and Children out of school service..
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the Principal, Head of School or Parent Liaison but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

This policy will be reviewed and updated when any new guidelines and legislation are issued by any relevant bodies.