



**Happy children; happy school.  
Achieving excellence in education.**

# **Attendance Policy**

Resources next review Summer 2025

# **Attendance Policy Lavendon School**

## **1. Introduction**

At Lavendon School we recognise the importance of regular school attendance. This is defined as 'attending on every occasion when the pupil is required to attend by the school' and believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is also vitally important that children arrive and leave school on time.

Education provides a means of enhancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines the educational process and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

High levels of attendance are the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, governors and all staff. Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects.

This policy is based on 'Advice on school attendance'. Dept. of Education 2023 (The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and updated guidance from March 2023 from Milton Keynes City Council.

## **Aims**

At Lavendon School we

- Aim to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- See regular school attendance as essential for all the pupils if they are to be successful, aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels
- Aim to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

## **2. The Law**

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education. Parents are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering their child at a school or by arranging an effective alternative to school.

Local Authorities have various powers to ensure that parents meet their duties.

### **4.1 Responsibilities of Parents**

There are legal obligations on parents to secure full-time education for their children of compulsory school age, whether at school or otherwise and to send them to school regularly to benefit from their education once they are on the school roll.

Parents must see themselves as partners with the school in their children's education and support the school in the following ways:

- Ensure the fullest possible attendance of their child by ensuring that their child attends every day that the school is open, unless absence is unavoidable.
- When absence is unavoidable, provide a verbal explanation in person or by telephone on the first day of absence, before 9:30am
- When absence continues for more than a day, contact the school by phone or letter
- In cases of long term sickness (more than one week) a medical certificate should be obtained from the GP and a copy given to the school
- Ensure that their child arrives at school and is collected from school on time

#### **4.2 Responsibilities of the School**

A school enters pupils on the admission and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed the pupil will attend.

It is the responsibility of Lavendon School to support attendance and to deal with problems which may lead to non-attendance. The school employs a range of strategies to improve and encourage good attendance and punctuality including responding to holiday requests and pursuing unexplained absences with parents. The school will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

Attendance data is analysed and quickly picks up on children who are developing a pattern of absence. Any child whose absence falls below 90% is contacted by the head teacher.

*Each day is counted as 2 sessions; 10% absence corresponds to 19 days (38 sessions/year)*

The monitoring process:

A child will be 'at risk' of persistent absence if 6 sessions (3 days) is recorded in a half term period. Thus 6 sessions over 6 half terms = 36 sessions absent (18 days)

At the end of each term, where attendance has dropped to <90% (6 sessions absent) parents will be contacted informing them of their child's actual attendance and informing them their child is at risk of persistent absence.

### **3. The Importance of Registration/Punctuality**

Registers are important legal documents and are kept securely. The law requires schools to register attendance twice a day:

- At the start of the morning session i.e. 9.00 a.m.
- Once during the afternoon session.

Calling the register is a key part of the school day and should be seen as such by staff, children and parents.

At Lavendon School children are marked either present or absent in the register. Particular attention is given to accurate registration; staff use consistent rules and coding for registration. It is our policy to actively discourage the late arrival of children at school. A child who arrives late may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning but also that of others. A firm line is taken on late arrivals. Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during

registration. If a pupil leaves school premises after registration they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registers are kept open for 30 minutes for each session. A pupil arriving after their register has closed (9:30am first session, 13:45 second session) is marked absent.

When a child arrives after the registration period the parent/carer bringing them to school must bring the child into the school office where they will be signed in; the child will then be registered 'late' for that session. If a pupil arrives 30 minutes or more after the closure of the register, the lateness will be recorded as **unauthorised** absence for that session unless an appropriate explanation is received.

When a child is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised. The school Business Support, Mrs Jeffcoate, enters this information onto the computer on a daily basis. If this persists the class teacher will inform the Headteacher who will contact the parent/carer. Unresolved lateness will then be referred to the Local Authority.

### **Notification of Absence**

All parents should notify the school as soon as possible if their child is absent giving a detailed reason for the absence. This can be done by:

- **Telephone/email:** the school administrator will then pass the message to the class teacher and enter the reason for absence directly into the register;
- **Letter:** the class teacher will place the letter in the register and enter the reason for absence into the register;

In the first instance class teachers should verbally follow up all absences which are unexplained. If no notification is received about a child's absence a telephone call will be made to parents asking for the reason.

## **4. School Responses to Absence**

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Where a child is absent at the time of registration the law requires schools to indicate on their attendance register whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or that an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted. The law requires that absences not agreed in advance are to be recorded as unauthorised unless and until a satisfactory explanation is given.

Lavendon School will

- Investigate all unexplained absences by telephoning the child's parents by 10.00 am
- Contact parents for an explanation if no message is received on a daily basis.
- Contact parents if it has any concerns over attendance
- Involve the Local Authority if parents fail to support the school in ensuring the fullest possible attendance of their children

By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. The school need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence if they doubt the explanation. If the school is satisfied that the circumstances are both genuine and exceptional the absence may be authorised.

Where parentally condoned and/or unjustified absence appears to be a problem the school will involve the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity.

### **Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

If Parent/ carers do not contact the school and the school is unable to get hold of the parent/carer, the school will

conduct a home visit to check the child is safe. This will happen before 11:30am. If we are concerned for the child's safety, a referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the police may be called.

If the school are concerned about a 'Child Absent in Education' the procedures stated within Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can disrupt continuity of learning. The school will therefore watch for emerging patterns of authorised absence by individual children.

### **Authorised absence from school.**

Authorised absence means that school has been notified about illness (routine medical or dental appointments) . Parents will need to complete a yellow leave of absence request form as well as providing evidence of the appointment. This could be a screenshot or a letter.

Application for leave of absence – Appendix A

### **Examples of Authorised Absence**

An absence will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

### **Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence is now recognised as 10% absence across a 12 week period.

#### **Annual Holidays**

At the pre-school induction meeting parents are asked to try to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. The Headteacher will talk to those parents who persistently take their holidays in term time, reminding parents of the disruption to their child's education. From September 2017, should the child miss more than 5 consecutive days in a 12 week school period, then a warning letter will be sent. This is a template letter recommended for use by Milton Keynes City Council, and a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) will be submitted to the Local Authority for consideration.

From the 1 September 2013, the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant leave. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Parents are required to complete a leave of absence form requesting absence from school. The school will respond in writing to these requests stating whether the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Each case will be looked at individually and take into account the child's current attendance record, as well as the number of days absent in the previous 12 school week period.

### **Penalty Notice**

Amendments to the 2007 regulations reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. From 1 September 2013, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence, as long as evidence is provided. If this is not produced within a 2-week period, the absence will be classified as unauthorised. Parents are advised to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupils should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. This will be at the Head's discretion.

### **Religious observance**

Absence due to religious observance is authorised. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

### **Unauthorised absence from school**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

- Absent from school without authorisation
- Arrived at school after registration closed

### **Examples of Unauthorised Absence**

The school cannot accept any of the following

- Shopping during school hours
- Special occasions e.g. birthdays
- No uniform/shoes
- Overslept
- Haircut
- At home due to family illness

## **5. Exclusions**

Where a child has been temporarily excluded [fixed term or permanent] he or she will remain on the school roll. The absence will be regarded as authorised. Once a permanent exclusion is confirmed the child will be removed from the school roll.

### **Communication with Parents**

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

### **Pre School Induction Meetings**

At the pre-school induction meetings held in the Summer term for children who will enter Lavendon School's Reception class in the following September, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only child left in the building.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance will be highlighted along with other school routines.

## **6. Parental Concerns**

Lavendon School is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All the staff at Lavendon School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which means they become unhappy, and may not want to attend school. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school, so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved.

The class teacher, the Pastoral Lead or Headteacher will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these will be discussed with the parent/guardian and appropriate action taken.

## **7. The Role of the LA**

The LA is charged in law with enforcing school attendance and must ensure that schools and parents are fulfilling their statutory obligations, including where necessary, the taking of action through the courts. If it appears to the LA that a child is not receiving a suitable education then they must begin procedures for issuing a 'School Attendance Order'.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The attendance of pupils will be monitored on a regular basis by the Headteacher and School Business support Mrs Wendy Jeffcoate.

The Headteacher will keep governors informed on attendance issues through the Headteacher's termly report to the Governing Body.

## **9. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed bi- annually

Date Agreed:	March 2023
Signed:	
Review Date:	Spring 2025

Appendix A

**Recorded by Class Teacher**



**Application for Leave of Absence**

**This form should be returned to the school office not less than two weeks prior to the period of absence required.**

**Please note the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

I request that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child) be granted leave  
of absence from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Number of  
days \_\_\_\_\_

(will return to school on) \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Confirmation slip** (to be returned by school)

\_\_\_\_\_ is granted leave of absence from

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (inclusive)

Authorised [  ]

Unauthorised [  ]

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)