

Lunesdale Learning Trust Attendance Policy

Approved by:	The Trust Board	Date: January 2021
---------------------	-----------------	---------------------------

Last reviewed on:	January 2021	By : Hayley Gray
--------------------------	--------------	-------------------------

Next review due by:	January 2022
----------------------------	--------------

Principle

Regular school attendance allows young people to take full advantage of the educational, emotional and social opportunities available to them in our schools and to become resilient, confident and competent adults, able to realise their true potential and to contribute to their community. We aim to promote and encourage regular attendance through an effective partnership between pupils, their parents/carers and the school.

Aims

- To promote good attendance
- To address persistent absenteeism and unjustified absence
- To ensure every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled
- To maintain consistency across both schools and the registration process
- To discourage absence due to family term time holiday s
- To ensure close liaison with pastoral leads, the LA inclusion team and other agencies
- To support parents with their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- To promote and support punctuality

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance figures for the trust. It also holds the Headteacher and Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher / Principal

The Headteacher / Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of this policy in their respective schools.

The Assistant Headteacher i/c Attendance

The Assistant Headteacher i/c Attendance is responsible for:

- Production and Implementation of this policy across both schools
- Monitoring absence data weekly and reporting it to the Headteacher / Principal and Trustees termly
- Supporting pastoral leads with maximizing the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing Letters of Concern, chairing Attendance Panels and Reviews
- Working with the LA education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- Liaising with the Education Welfare Officer re Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Liaising with external agencies re alternative educational provision, where appropriate

Pastoral Leads / Heads of Year

Heads of Year / Vice Principal i/c pastoral care is responsible for:

- Liaising with form tutors / learning coaches on emerging attendance or punctuality concerns
- Contacting parents to discuss emerging attendance issues
- Liaising with teachers to provide work for absent pupils
- Liaising with the Headteacher i/c attendance re any emerging issues or patterns

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Taking calls and responds to emails from parents about absence and records it on the school system.
- Inputting, monitoring and producing attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the pastoral leads and Assistant Headteacher i/c Attendance
- Running a report on attendance data for each year group on a weekly basis
- Producing attendance reports as required
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Logging, typing up and providing paperwork for Attendance Panels and Reviews

- Processing and logging absence requests
- Making any 'First Day Calling' calls required

Class teachers, Form tutors and Learning Coaches

Class teachers, form tutors and Learning Coaches are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, on Bromcom and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.20pm and will be kept open until 2.40pm

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible via the attendance hotline or an email to student absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Pupils are only expected to be absent for part of the day.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Pupils must sign in on arrival
- Pupils may be asked to make up the time at break or lunchtime

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Reporting to parents

Individual absence totals are included on termly Effort Grade reports to parents.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher / Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' for absence, which meet the DfE criteria. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher / Principal may grant term-time holiday
- Study leave for some Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations
- Flexi-schooling contracts to cover the core curriculum, where this has been recommended by a medical specialist
- Work experience or sporting absences, where evidence is provided and students are supervised by an appropriate, recognized agency

Term time holiday requests

Parents have no legal entitlement to take their child out of school during the school term and can be fined by the LA for doing so. However, if there are exceptional reasons for the holiday, which meet the DfE guidelines listed below, school is permitted to authorise up to 10 days holiday in any one year, provided the child's attendance is otherwise excellent and that the holiday form has been completed at least 2 weeks prior to the event. The DfE states that parent's working rotas and holiday costs cannot be accepted as valid reasons.

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad (requires evidence that no leave is due in the near future that coincides with school holidays)
- The absence is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of an immediate family member

Reducing persistent absence

Persistent absence will be addressed in the following way, following DfE and LA guidelines:

- A Letter of Concern highlighting the issue to parents
- An Attendance Panel with parents, child and HoY, chaired by the Assistant Headteacher
- An Attendance Panel Review
- Closure, Extension or Referral to another agency

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for promoting attendance

100% attendance is rewarded annually at Awards ceremonies for each year group. It is also monitored and rewarded within forms by HoYs / pastoral leads.

Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer and Assistant Headteacher i/c attendance monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health and to call in on each subsequent day, unless medical evidence is provided for longer term absence.

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Each school collects and stores attendance data on Bromcom and this may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support
- Supply information for pastoral leads at key data collection points
- To inform legal attendance procedures

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated by Hayley Gray, Assistant Headteacher i/c Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.