



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Lawley Primary School

Success Starts by Being at School

Policy Summary

At Lawley Primary School we strive to create an environment where children love to be at school and enjoy their school day. We appreciate that, for some children, this point can take longer to reach and there can be barriers on the way. We, as a school, will do everything we can to help identify those barriers and work to minimise them so that every child can attend and be happy in a school that supports them and prepares them for 'big school' and beyond. To do this we agree that parents, pupils, and staff need to work together for the single aim of each pupil striving to be the best they can be.

For compulsory school aged children presence in school is an educational and social development opportunity which we do not want to take away from them.

It is a legal requirement that parents ensure regular attendance at school (or otherwise) for their children where they are of compulsory school age. Failing to do so may have consequences for the parents, but also consequences for the pupil and their learning.

This policy explains the importance of school attendance, how it will be approached, how barriers can be overcome and the risks around poor attendance.

The Importance of Regular School Attendance

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Lawley Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must therefore be a high priority for school, governors, Local Authority's, parents and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils reduce the value of the education provided for them; they may also damage the learning of others because fluctuations in the size of pupil group may restrict the scope for effective teaching.

Attendance is now increasingly regarded as a measure of the quality of the education offered by a school and the government has indicated that all schools should be aiming for a target of at least 97%.

Schools will wish to encourage and promote good attendance in as many ways and for as many pupils as they can, but they will need to balance this with measures to address the needs of those children who do - for whatever reason - find it difficult to attend. A whole-school approach to attendance will focus primarily on promoting attendance but will also address the issue of truancy and condoned absence where it occurs. In addition, schools should ensure that pupils who fall into the 'persistent absentee' category should be closely monitored, and support offered. The threshold for persistent absence currently stands at 90%.

For children who fall under the persistent absence criteria, a meeting will be arranged with the parent/carer to draw up a Parent Contract. This will aim to support and improve attendance for that child and family. This will give families the opportunity to discuss any difficulties that may be preventing the child from attending school. If this is the case, an Early Help Assessment would be offered to support the family.

Legal Responsibilities

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:-

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full-time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Philosophy

Lawley Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Sarah Nicholas, and she can be contacted via email on sarah.nicholas@taw.org.uk. Staff, parents, and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality.

The school will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8.55am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by between **8.45am** and **8:55am**.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:30am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:10pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:15pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Absence Procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **8.30am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school registration system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than 3 school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in **one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

We will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, we reserve the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any leave of absence during term time can be disruptive both to the child's learning and to the school whether for a family holiday or for any other reason. We will only consider leave in term time where both:

- the application is made to the headteacher in advance of the leave by a parent/carer the child normally lives with,
- there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the headteacher for the leave.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the leave as possible, and at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested dates to allow the school sufficient time for appropriate and parents/carers should speak to the school before they book any holidays. We will only agree absence in exceptional circumstances.

How do we consider leave of absence requests?

While absence may be granted for leave during term time, it is entirely the Headteacher's decision and is not a parental right.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

Parents could be issued with a penalty notice if their child is absent from school without permission. In Telford & Wrekin, Holiday Penalty Notices (HPN) are issued by the Attendance Support Team to parents who take their children out of school during term time without getting authorisation from the school. The penalty is £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days. If parent/carers fail to pay the penalty fine within 28 days they will be prosecuted. This rate is set by Telford and Wrekin and may be liable to changes.

We will carefully explore with parents why the leave of absence is necessary. Where absences are sanctioned, they will be counted as an **authorised** absence.

Where parents fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away from school in excess of the period agreed or, where parents fail to apply for permission, the extra time taken will be treated as an **unauthorised** absence.

All requests for leave of absence should be in writing and the application should be made by a parent with day-to-day care of the child even if they are not actually going on holiday themselves. If the parent with whom the child lives does not give consent to the holiday, leave cannot be given lawfully by the school **except** by a court order.

As a school we request that parents are mindful of the following:

- advanced permission must be agreed
- the absence should be planned carefully with the school
- extended visits, where possible should be made during school holidays
- leave of absence during examination time should be avoided
- children who miss school for six weeks or more fall behind in their school work by a full term
- some children never catch up and will under-perform in their examinations
- their child's name may be removed from the register if he or she has not returned to school within twenty school days of the expected date of return

Illness and Healthcare Appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** in advance.

We will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

We may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Attendance intervention

If a child is of compulsory school age and is registered at a school, it is essential that they attend school regularly to allow a child to fulfil their potential. As a school we want all our children to achieve, and we are constantly looking at ways of improving our systems for that to happen. One of the systems we have been reviewing is attendance. For a school to be considered to have good attendance we must have attendance of at least 97%. Our school attendance for the academic year 2022/2023 was 95.3%.

We continually monitor attendance and have made it a key target for our school. We are implementing attendance steps which will be in line with Local Authority and Government Guidance. The steps will involve a series of letters which will be sent if your child's attendance becomes a cause of concern. We appreciate that children get ill and that in these circumstances they need to stay off school, however we would like to encourage children to attend school if they are just feeling a little under the weather or have a runny nose. We can only achieve this by working together.

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. The table below shows the amount of lost learning a child may have by missing school.

100% attendance	Zero days missed	Perfection!
99% attendance	Two days of absence across the year	Excellent!
97% attendance	Five days of absence across the year	Good
95% attendance	Nine days of absence across the year: one week and four days of learning missed.	Satisfactory
90% attendance	Nineteen days of absence across the year; three weeks and four days of learning missed	Poor
85% attendance	Twenty-eight days of absence across the year: five weeks and three days of learning missed.	Very Poor
80% attendance	Thirty-eight days of absence across the year: seven weeks and 3 days of learning missed.	Unacceptable
75% attendance	Forty-six days of absence across the year: nine weeks and one day of learning missed.	Unacceptable

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Autumn Term 100%	Bronze Certificate	100%
Spring Term 100%	Bronze Certificate for 1 term Silver Certificate for 2 terms (Autumn & Spring.)	100%
Summer Term 100%	Bronze Certificate for 1 term Silver Certificate for 2 terms (Spring & Summer) Gold Certificate for 3 terms (Autumn, Spring & Summer.)	100%

We have a range of new incentives in school so every child has the chance of receiving an award at some point during the school year. Each half term children who have 100% attendance for the half term will receive a 100% attendance certificate. We are launching our Bronze, Silver and Gold Attendance Award Certificates. At the end of a full term, children who have 100% attendance for the full term will receive a bronze, silver or gold certificate.

At the end of each full term any children with 97% attendance and above will be entered into a draw and a winner from each key stage, EYFS, KS1 and KS2 will be selected and awarded a gift voucher or a prize.

Principles

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law,
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- display attendance rates around the school, on the website and social media pages and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils,
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence
- consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy,
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors,
- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed,
- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

Procedures

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

- follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone/text message, or if the parent is unavailable send a standard email (not letter) requesting information
- consider sending a second email and phone call (not letter) if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained.
- refer to the school's nominated attendance persons (NAP), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence, home visit to be made by DSL or DDSL and consider a referral to '*Family Connect*' if no contact can be made with the parent or concerns following visit.
- At 10 days of unauthorised absence child must be reported under Children Missing in Education Act to the Local Authority.
- Help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible
- Contact ***Family Connect 01952 385385*** for further guidance on available support.

Lateness

- A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late are guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if late arrival, after the register closes, is not resolved.
- Persistent lateness can be as damaging to a pupil's school career as persistent absence. Pupils who arrive late disrupt not only their own education but that of others and being persistently late may also lead to truancy.
- Once the reasons for lateness have been established, the parents, pupil and school need to work in partnership to resolve the difficulties.

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Governor Statement

The Governors of Lawley Primary have agreed the following Attendance policy. This is in line with the curriculum aims recommended by the LA, which were adapted and adopted by the Governors of this school.

Headteachers signature

Chair of Governors signature

Date: September 2023

(Review date: September 2024)