



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Lawley Primary School

Success Starts by Being at School

Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance Mrs Carol McQuiggin
Governor with responsibility for attendance Mr Oliver Nicholas
Attendance Team: Mrs Sarah Nicholas (Attendance & Communication Officer)
Mrs Katie Robinson (Pupil and Family Support Officer)
Education Welfare Officer Leanne Hayward
All staff are responsible for attendance

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. Where appropriate, this policy also applies to non-compulsory aged pupils as we recognise the value of embedding positive habits for attendance from a child's earliest days in education.

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. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. 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.

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. In line with the ethos of 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', we will offer support to families to overcome any barriers to attendance. Every family and every situation is different, so support will

be tailored to suit. We will always start with a conversation, listening to concerns and identifying a family's needs. Sometimes, all of the support that a family might need can be provided in school. In other cases, with parental consent, we may suggest or signpost a family to external services who are more specialised in the area that they would like help with. Parents/carers can approach any member of staff who will help parents to explore the support they need.

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.

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%.

We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

Pupils who fall into the 'persistent absentee' category will be closely monitored, and support offered. The threshold for persistent absence currently stands at 90%. Any parents whose children fall under the persistent absence criteria, will be offered a meeting 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 Senior Attendance Champion is Carol McQuiggin, and she can be contacted via email on lawley.primary@taw.org.uk. Staff, parents, and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

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.
- We will share data with the 'DFE Wonde' attendance software using pupil data and school comparison data. We will use available local and national figures to benchmark our attendance performance as well as to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.

Times of School Registration

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

8.45 a.m. Gates open

8.55 a.m. Gates close

8.55 a.m. Morning Registration

If your child arrives at school later than 8.55 a.m. they will be marked as late (L) if it is after 9:25 a.m. they will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U).

1.30 p.m. Afternoon registration

Absence Procedures

- We expect parents/carers to contact the School Office via telephone before 8.30am if a child is going to be absent.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent child by the close of registration:

- Follow first day absence procedures - administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone as soon as is practicable.
- If no response is received a text message will be sent followed by a further text.
- A home visit will be made by a member of the School's pastoral team if no contact is made to the school by midday.
- If on visiting the family home no one is present, a compliments slip will be left asking parent to contact the school. This will be done for the next 3 days where no contact is made.

- If after 3 days (or sooner where there are safeguarding concerns) school will consider a referral to Family Connect.
- At 10 days of unauthorised absence child must be reported under Children Missing in Education Act to the Local Authority.

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.

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.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

From August 19th 2024 the Government have introduced a new 'national framework for Penalty Notices'. (in Telford & Wrekin the changes apply from 1st September 2024).

There are significant changes that parents need to be aware of:

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive.
- Penalty Notices are increasing to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.
- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
- If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. For example, when a parent purposefully tries to avoid a Penalty Notice by taking their child out of school when there is only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday attached to that week.
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence).

In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of this school support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Aug 2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or

other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.) Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address. As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10 week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.

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. DFE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence. We will only consider leave in term time where both:

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.

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. Where it is unavoidable for an appointment to take place during the school day, for example an emergency, consultant or orthodontics appointment, parents are requested to provide evidence to school to ensure that their child's registration coding remains accurate.

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 2023/2024 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.

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.

Approved by the Governing Body on

(Review date: July 2026)