



Lindow Community Primary School

School Policies

Control Sheet

Policy: **Attendance & Punctuality**

Policy Type: **Statutory**

Author: **Headteacher**

Reviewing committee: **PDBW**

Policy: Attendance

1. Introduction

At Lindow Community Primary School we believe that good attendance and punctuality is everyone's business. Good attendance and punctuality is essential if children are to receive the greatest benefit from their education, fulfil their academic potential and gain the appropriate skills that will equip them for life.

Lindow Community Primary School aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating a policy within which staff, pupils, parents, governors and partner agencies can work collaboratively. We aim to promote good attendance by creating a caring, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be, every day, and are keen and ready to learn.

In development and implementation of this policy, Lindow Community Primary School has considered its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We acknowledge that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families.

The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance is the headteacher, who can be contacted via the school office.

2. Statutory duties

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority, including but not exclusive to the following:

- Advice from the Department for Education

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- Advice from Cheshire East Local Authority

[Attendance and children out of education \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

- The Education Act 1996
- OFSTED guidance

[School inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

3. Aims and Objectives

- To ensure children reach their full potential
- Ensure a minimum 95% attendance (apart from those with chronic health issues) and no late marks (except in exceptional circumstances) for all children
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality is 'the norm' and demonstrates to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance and punctuality
- Work in partnership with parents, children, staff, governors and the Local Authority to ensure good attendance and punctuality for all children

- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- To recognise the important role of class teachers, support staff and the senior leadership team in promoting and monitoring good attendance.
- To communicate with parents at key points in the school year, reporting on attendance and punctuality and reminding parents of the school's attendance policy

4. Types of Absence

- Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. That is why information about the cause of absence is required.
- Parents may not authorise a child's absence, only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents.
- Absences are authorised for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments if they unavoidably fall in school time, exceptional family circumstances, involvement in approved educational enrichment activity, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.
- Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable, such as absences that have not been explained, day trips, or holidays that have not been agreed. This type of absence can lead to legal proceedings.

5. Incentivising attendance and punctuality

Lindow Community Primary School acknowledges that good attendance and punctuality is often due to circumstances beyond the control of the individual child. For this reason, we do not offer rewards for good attendance or punctuality as part of our normal practice and procedures, as this can be further detrimental to those children who struggle with attendance and punctuality. We may, however, offer rewards and/or incentives on an individual basis in discussion and agreement with the child/family involved, if we believe this will positively contribute to a child's attendance or punctuality.

6. Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

- Fulfilling their legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular, punctual and full-time basis. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Providing, where requested by the school, medical evidence to support illness/ medical appointments. This may be necessary for an absence to be authorised.

- Making applications for authorised absence to the Headteacher where this is required. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.
- Talking to the class teacher or headteacher as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

School

- Having a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils, parents and governors understand.
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers and having effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Building strong relationships with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working with families to remove them.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Procedures

Parents/Carers

- Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school before registration closes at 9am. Doors into school are opened at 8.50am, and time should be allowed to enable children to manage their belongings.
- If a child arrives after 9am his/her parent/carer should report directly to the school office.
- Parents must ensure that if their child is to be absent that they contact the school on the first morning of absence, and on each subsequent morning of absence. This may be by phone, email or in person to the school office. Class dojo should not be used for reporting absence or lateness

School

- Registers are taken twice daily, promptly at 9.00a.m. and 12:45 p.m. (Yrs R,2,4,&6) and 1 p.m. (Yrs 1,3 &5)
- Children who arrive after 9.00am will be marked as 'late' (code L)
- Registers will close at 9.20am and 1.20pm. Any child arriving after that time will be recorded as 'late after close of register' (code U), which is then classed as an unauthorised absence for that session. Children who are late are disrupting not only their own education but that of others.
- Registers will be marked using the symbols advised by DFE and Cheshire East Council.
- Should a pupil be absent at morning registration, unless a message has been received, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's parent or guardian.

- The Headteacher will monitor attendance and punctuality weekly and take appropriate action with those families causing concern, as follows:

Intervention Strategies and Rates of Absence

<i>Percentage since the start of the school year</i>	<i>Intervention based on total attendance since start of the year. At the end of each term the following procedures will be followed...</i>
90%-94.9%	Letter sent to parents informing them of the percentage of absence
80%-89.9%	Letter sent alerting parents of concern due to 'persistent absenteeism'
<80% or no improvement for children with 80-89.9% in weekly monitoring	Meeting with parent (and child if appropriate) on a regular basis. Setting of long term and short term targets and production of individual action plan. Local Authority support officer intervention as appropriate.

Intervention Strategies and Rates of Lateness

<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Intervention based on the percentage of lateness since the start of the year. At the end of each term the following procedures will be followed...</i>
3 or more late marks in a term	Late letter sent alerting parents of concern
Further late marks following initial letter	Meeting with parent (and child if appropriate) on a regular basis. Setting of long term and short term targets and production of individual action plan. Local authority support/intervention as appropriate if lateness is as Late (after register is closed) and categorised on the register a 'U'

School will be aware of the reasons for high levels of absence/punctuality and be sensitive towards the causes before issuing the sample letter(s)

- Reports on attendance and punctuality data and concerns are completed by the headteacher and shared with the PDBW governing body committee on a termly basis

8. Leave in term time

Statutory guidance from the DfE and the Local Authority is that headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in writing in advance

using the 'Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances that warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

If parents still decide to take children out of school and are therefore absent without permission then school has no choice but to mark the absence as unauthorised. Headteachers can refer the unauthorised absence to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to those parents who take their children on unauthorised leave of absence in term time (£60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days). Failure to make payment will result in the Local Authority taking legal action for failure to ensure regular attendance at school under section 444 (1) Education Act 1996.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

9. Catch-up/remote learning

If a child is well, yet has to be absent from school due to enforced self-isolation, in relation to Public Health England guidance (e.g. if they have an infectious disease) or if they are absent from school due to authorised reasons, the school will provide remote learning at the parents' request. If a child's absence is due to illness, or for unauthorised reasons e.g. a family holiday, remote learning will not be provided. Teachers will ensure sufficient support is given for the child to catch up on missed learning upon the child's return to school.

10. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Persistently absent pupils (those with attendance below 90%) are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral support system and referred to the Local Authority for further support/guidance when internal measures are not improving attendance, as per the above guidance.

11. Safeguarding

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility; as such, failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Where the school have concerns regarding safeguarding and attendance, the normal procedures detailed above will not always be followed and we will immediately refer to our safeguarding procedures.

12. Partnerships

At Lindow Community Primary School we very much value the partnership we share with parents, children, staff, governors, the community and the Education Welfare Officer in matters of attendance and punctuality.

Whilst any child can be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for a variety of other reasons. Experience has taught us that such problems are most effectively resolved within the secure partnership between school, parents and child. If a child is reluctant to attend, or a parent/carer is worried for any reason, then they should contact their child's class teacher or the headteacher in the first instance to agree a united approach.