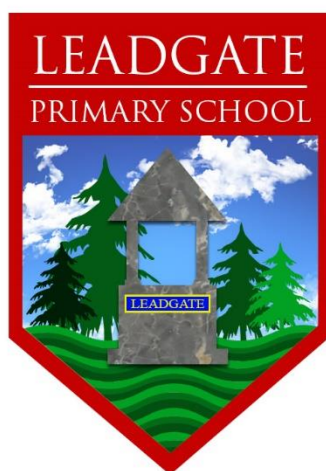


# **Attendance Policy**

## **Leadgate Primary School**



**Academic Year**

**2023/24**

**Version 1.1**



**Attendance Policy**

**Leadgate Primary School**

**Document History Log:**

<b>Author of document:</b>	Mr M Watson	<b>Job role:</b>	Head Teacher
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<b>Task</b>	<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Signatories</b>
First document review	Sept 2022	Mr M Watson & Curriculum and Standards Cmtt	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Review	Sept 2023	Mr M Watson & Curriculum and Standards Cmtt	
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**Revisions Log:**

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date of revision</b>	<b>Reason for revision</b>	<b>Resulting version number</b>	<b>Signatories</b>

2 <sup>nd</sup> review	Sept 23	Update staffing	1.1	<i>Mr Watson</i>
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### Attendance key contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Mr M Watson	Head Teacher	02107 610354
Mrs C Hannon / Miss L Weaver	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance	Upper School 01207 610351 Lower School 01207 610355
Mrs Rachel McGregor	School Office Administrative Assistant	01207 610355

### Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs Rachel McGregor	School Office Administrative Assistant	01207 610355
Mrs leanne Hood	A Star Attendance Officer	07507264441
Various	Class Teachers	Upper School 01207 610351 Lower School 01207 610355

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Referring fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr M Watson and can be contacted via 01207 610355.

## **Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

## **School Office Staff**

School Office Staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- They will also contact parents if there has been no reason given for absence.
- Liaise with senior leaders to share/alert concerns around attendance.
- Administrative Assistant will process all letters to parents / carers updating A Star Attendance system and liaise with the Attendance officer for contact details etc

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos**

Leadgate Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

### **Why is regular attendance so important?**

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

### **Here's what the data shows:**

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

**This policy is supported by our policies on:**

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**Anti Bullying**

**Behaviour Policy**

**Inclusion and Equality**

**Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs**

**The school and all partners will work together to:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **1. Expectations**

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

### **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance – supported at all levels of the school staff.
- Immediate support from administrative staff to seek and support parents and carers.
- Promote positive engagement with the curriculum and extra curricular offers to ensure pupil engagement at all times.

## **2. Attendance data**

We use school attendance data to support children whose attendance falls below required standards. This will be taken automatically updated every 24 hours from the school's data management system and tracked / managed against pupil target. Notification letters will be auto generated depending on the level of attendance and the current stage of involvement with the attendance officer. The system will also record allocated notes of home visits and welfare visits.

We will also manage year groups and classes within it to monitor patterns and through reports generated on the data management system to track trends and early indicators for key pastoral groups over time.

We will request families to join us in school to have discussions regarding attendance at the earliest opportunity.

## **3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance**

We understand that families face many issues, including financial, medical and family concerns. We are committed to working with families to build great relationships, built upon mutual respect. We encourage families to speak to us at the earliest opportunity to support attendance. Parent may be request a meeting with Mr Watson to explore current Attendance issues. Where possible we will support families with Attendance plans and help them improve attendance, including offering free breakfast and after school clubs. During home visits and welfare visits parents / carers will be able to make direct contact with the attendance officer Leanne Hood. Should they be unable to meet leanne will leave a contact



card at the home address. When Stage 2 letters are issued parents / carers also have the opportunity to return a note explaining / requesting meeting or further support.

#### **4. Facilitate support**

We will keep an attendance register, 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 Any amendment to the

attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the

amendment We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

- The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and closes at 9.15am
- The register for the second session will be taken after lunch.

The school encourages parents to speak with us and discuss issues of attendance. We are happy to offer support, either informally or by for example referring parents for Early Help support or working with the Attendance officer or through work with the SENCo.

#### **5. Formalise support**

Reducing Persistence Absence Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance including a referral to the Attendance Improvement Team if strategies put in place do not improve attendance.

## 6. Enforce

The school can refer the absence to the local authority which in turn 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 the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- 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.

### **General / frequently asked questions**

#### **When can children be absent from school?**

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.

- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

### **What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?**

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Your child's headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

### **Can I take my child on holiday during term time?**

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

## **Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes**

### **Attendance and absence management**

#### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

- ✓ Our school builds good relationships between staff and families to promote good
- ✓ attendance and break down barriers to attendance where

- attendance and punctuality are a concern.
- ✓ Communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality via assemblies, newsletters, school app, class dojo, meetings with parents and via website
  - ✓ Attendance is celebrated as part of our weekly VIP assembly and shared in weekly Newsletters
  - ✓ Termly reports to parents include attendance
  - ✓ Liaise with other services to promote good attendance
  - ✓ Outline how the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance.

### **Communication**

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

### **On the first day of absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

### **Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will call to verify the absence (this may include contacting all recorded contact numbers / relatives) and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

### **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

### **Punctuality:**

Registration time is at Leadgate Primary is 9 am at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

### **If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

### **If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions**

- Should a pupil's punctuality become a concern, parents will be notified in writing in the first instance.

### **If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason**

- If punctuality is still a concern then parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss ways to support.

## **Help & Support**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

## **Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

## **Pupils with specific needs**

We account for the specific needs of pupils/pupil cohorts, be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of the policy, consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **Children Missing from Education**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.