



LOUGHBOROUGH  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Loughborough Primary School and Children Centre

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2020/2021

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Laura McPhee  
Headteacher

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Sarah Haines  
Chair of Governors

## Context

Loughborough Primary School is committed to providing an inclusive and high-quality education for all our pupils. We believe that good attendance and punctuality are vital elements in ensuring that pupils derive maximum benefit from the education we provide.

Good attendance habits and good punctuality are important life skills that children should acquire at an early age. Research evidence shows that there is a clear link between poor attendance and academic under-achievement.

### **Children who attend school regularly:**

- make better progress academically.
- are more confident socially.
- have more stable friendships.
- cope better with school routines and school work.
- find learning easier.

### **Poor punctuality also has a detrimental impact on children's education and social well-being at school. Children who arrive at school late:**

- may miss important information or instructions that are often given out at the beginning of the day.
- will miss opportunities to settle into the school day alongside their peers.
- will miss crucial learning opportunities.
- will disrupt another children's learning.
- may often be embarrassed by arriving late.

## Our Aims

Loughborough Primary School aims to

- maintain an attendance rate above the national average of 96 %.
- maintain good standards of punctuality.
- ensure that parents and carers are aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- ensure that parents and carers are aware of the school's procedures and systems for dealing with poor attendance and lateness.
- support parents and carers to resolve issues which may be affecting their child's attendance or punctuality.

## Actions

- We will promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality in our newsletters; on our website; in regular bulletins/letters; at parents' evenings and meetings; and in our parental agreement.
- We will acknowledge and reward good and improving attendance and punctuality.
- We will make parents and carers fully aware of the detrimental educational and social consequences of persistent poor attendance or lateness.
- We will make parents and carers fully aware of the legal consequences of persistent poor attendance or lateness.
- We will monitor attendance and punctuality and follow up unexplained absence, patterns of absence, or episodes of lateness by phone calls, home visits and letters. Parents/carers will also be invited to a meeting with a member of the school's senior management team if necessary
- We will work in partnership with parents/carers to attempt to resolve issues that are leading to poor attendance or punctuality.
- In the event of persistent poor attendance or persistent lateness we will require parents to attend a meeting with a member of the school's management team in order to agree how to improve attendance or punctuality. If following this there is no improvement, parents/carers will be required to come to an attendance panel. The function of this panel will be
  - to ensure parents/carers are aware of the detrimental impact of poor attendance or frequent lateness.
  - to identify any issues or causes that are leading to poor attendance or frequent lateness.
  - to put in place an attendance contract to improve attendance or punctuality.
  - The Attendance contract will include a monitoring period of 3 weeks.
  - to refer families to other agencies or the Local Authority School Attendance Officer as necessary.
  - to ensure that parents/carers are fully aware of the legal consequences of persistent poor attendance.
- We will publish our attendance rate in the school profile and the Governing Body's Annual Report to parents.

## **Reporting of absence**

### **If a child is absent the parent/carer must**

- Contact the school by 8.45 am or as soon as possible on each day of absence. They should provide an explanation of the absence and, if possible, an indication of the expected duration.
- In the event that the child is unwell for more than one day it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school office on each day of absence.

### **If your child is absent, we will:**

- Telephone the parent/carer on the first day of absence if no notification of absence has been received and daily until we have sought a reason for the absence;
- If we are unable to contact the parent/carer or we have not received a satisfactory evidence for the child's absence, we may also complete an unannounced home visit. to the child's registered home address to attempt to establish reasons for absence. This may result in a referral to Social Care if contact is not made.
- If no contact is made within 10 days the school will follow statutory procedures for reporting children missing in education completing a MARF form.
- Retain records of reasons for absence.
- Maintain a log of first morning of absence calls made.
- Request a written explanation of absence if it believes this to be necessary.
- Request evidence from a GP practice, hospital, or clinic if we believe this to be necessary.

## **Medical appointments**

- Parents are expected to make medical appointments outside of school hours, however we appreciate this is not always possible.
- We would not expect a child to be absent all day for health appointments please ensure your child returns to school after the appointment. An appointment card with the date and time of the appointment or a hospital letter should be brought to the school office for the school to authorise the absence and record it accurately on the child's attendance record.

## **Term time leave of absence**

- In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note that:
- The headteacher can now request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents when pupils take leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the Local Authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

- Penalty fines are also applicable for 3 days/six sessions non-attendance over a 6-week period.

There is **no entitlement** to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only granted during term time in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. A form must be collected at the office by a parent/carer wishing to apply for a leave of absence.

Term time leave taken without prior permission from the school will be treated as unauthorised absence and parents/carers may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action.

#### **Definitions of Authorised/unauthorised absence:**

- Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'authorised absences' (eg. child's illness, family bereavement, religious observance). These can only be authorised by the school and are not automatically authorised because they are covered by a written note from a parent/carer.
- However, there are absences which are not permitted by law and are known as 'unauthorised absence' (eg. a child's birthday; a family day out, waiting for a delivery).
- Where there is no adequate explanation for an absence this will be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority and parents/carers could be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action.

#### *Authorising absence due to illness:*

*We will ask for medical evidence if your child's absence is due to illness and your child has been absent for 3 days or more.*

*Medical evidence may take the form of appointment cards, prescriptions, a consultant's letter/report, or a doctor's note. Absence will be unauthorised unless this has been received.*

#### **Intervention Procedures for pupils who are at risk of reaching persistent absence**

- Attendance will be reviewed weekly.

#### **During the Autumn term:**

- Parents/carers of pupils whose attendance rate falls below 96% during the school year will be sent a letter stating that there is an expectation that attendance will improve immediately. The school will continue to monitor these pupils' attendance whilst it remains below 96%.
- Parents/carers of pupils whose attendance falls to 96% or less will be asked to attend a meeting with a member of the school's management team. The purpose of this meeting will be to devise and agree a plan for improvement. If there is no significant improvement within 3 weeks of the date of this meeting, or if any improvement is not sustained and the pupil's attendance rate begins to fall again, parents/carers will be required to attend a school attendance panel,
- Parents/carers of pupils whose attendance shows insufficient improvement following such a meeting will be asked to attend a school attendance panel. An action plan for improvement will be agreed at this meeting. A review date will be agreed and if sufficient improvement is

still not made within 3 weeks we may request that a penalty notice is issued by the local authority; and/or make a referral via a MARF (Multi-Agency Referral Form) to the Local Authority's Multi Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH). This may result in court proceedings.

- All instances of actual or potential persistent absence will be examined individually and the Headteacher reserves the right to exercise discretion to avoid invoking any or all of the above procedures if they are deemed inappropriate.

### **Children not yet of compulsory school age (CSA)**

- Children who attend nursery but are not of compulsory school age are expected to maintain an attendance rate which is comparable to that of the rest of the school, although it is recognised that common childhood illnesses are more prevalent in younger children. However, if a nursery child's attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will be sent a letter stating that there is an expectation that attendance will improve immediately. The school will continue to monitor these pupils' attendance whilst it remains below 90%.
- If there is not an immediate and sustained improvement parents/carer will be asked to attend a meeting with a member of the school's management team. The purpose of this meeting will be to devise and agree a plan for improvement.
- If there is still no sustained improvement the school reserves the right to withdraw the child's nursery place.

### **Lateness**

- Children should arrive no later than 8.50 am when the bell will be rung and they can go into class.
- Government legislation requires that the registration is closed every morning. At Loughborough Primary this takes place at 9:10am each day. Lateness after the close of registration will *also* be counted as half day absence and parents/carers could be subject to the sanctions outlined above.

### **Repeated Lateness**

- Lateness will be reviewed regularly.
- After repeated instances of lateness, parents/carers will be sent a letter stating that there is an expectation that punctuality will improve immediately.
- If there is no consistent improvement in punctuality parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with a member of the school's management team. The purpose of this meeting will be to devise and agree a plan for improvement.

### **Religious observance in term time**

- The school will authorise a maximum of 2 days leave for religious observance. Please note this is inclusive of travel time to your destination.
- All requests for leave due to religious observance must be made in advance and in writing to the headteacher.



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Email: [office@loughborough.lambeth.sch.uk](mailto:office@loughborough.lambeth.sch.uk)

**Headteacher: Mrs L McPhee**

**Deputy Head: Ms M Madden**

**Appendix 1 Attendance letter (Below 96%)**

Date:

Dear **[parent/carers name]**,

**Re: [child's name] [DOB]**

I am writing in connection with **[child's name]** attendance which is now a concern. **[child's name]** attendance is now **[percentage]** which is below the required attendance set by current legislation, and what is expected by the school.

Regular attendance and punctuality provide the children with a stable and consistent pattern of learning and provides a good foundation at an early age to help your child later on.

We are aware that there can be underlying issues which could be affecting the attendance, please get in touch should you wish to discuss anything that may be contributing to this. It is vital that you contact the school on the first day of absence and keep us updated daily if any absence is to continue for more than one day. If there is medical evidence to support any sick days they must be brought into school to be logged by the office.

We will monitor **[child's Name]** attendance for the next two weeks, if it does not improve it may be necessary to take further action.

Yours Sincerely,

Laura McPhee  
Headteacher



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## **Appendix 2 - Attendance letter (Below 90%)**

Date:

Dear **[parent/carers name]**

### **School warning letter**

We are writing in connection with **[child's name]** attendance. Despite our previous communication, there has been **little/no** improvement and is considerably below the average of the school. Children frequently get colds, stomach upsets, etc and some time off due to illness is to be expected, but we are concerned when attendance falls below 90%. **[child's name]** attendance is currently **[percentage]**. There is a legal duty on parents to secure full attendance without lateness on a daily basis, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and attendance will continue to be monitored on a daily basis with the school.

Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue and must be treated seriously. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If there is no consistent improvement a referral will be made by the school to Lambeth's Education Welfare and Courts Team, who will start a legal process.

I hope that we see **[child's name]** attendance improve dramatically so there will be no need for the school to make a referral to Lambeth's Education Welfare and Courts Team.

We would like to discuss this matter further with you. Please attend a meeting with the school's Educational Welfare Officer on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Yours sincerely,

Laura McPhee

Headteacher





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### Appendix 3 - Medical evidence letter

Dear **[Parents name]**

Due to **[child's Name]** attendance being at **[percentage]** and there being **[number of unauthorised sessions]**, you will now need to provide medical evidence to the school if he/ She is off school due to illness. This can be in the form of

- Prescription labels with your child's name, date and date of birth.
- Medicine containers or package which again clearly states your child's name and date of birth.
- A doctor note stating why your child was off school
- Medical appointment cards. Please note that doctor's appointments do not necessarily mean that your child has to have the whole day of school but just the stated time period.
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Please note that if your child is absent from school and medical evidence is not provided then your child's absence will be recorded as "O" code, which is an unauthorised absence.

I must therefore warn you that unless there is an immediate and sustained improvement in (Child's First Name) attendance legal proceedings may be instigated against you, as the person with parental responsibility, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Your child's attendance will be reviewed on the **[date]** If **[child's Name]** attendance has not improved and you have not followed what has been stipulated in this letter, then the school will consider one of the following courses of actions:

- Convening a School Attendance Panel
- Raising a Fixed Penalty Notice fine
- Referring the matter to the local authority to consider legal intervention.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Laura McPhee  
Headteacher

## Appendix 4 SAP Checklist

**\*Important \***

**Please ensure the reason for absence is not due to Covid 19, ensure that parent/s are asked if the child is shielding or any family members have symptoms, absences related to Covid 19 are to be authorised as directed by government please refer to the guidance. Covid 19 cases must not be addressed by holding SAP meetings.**

- Have you established whether there are attendance concerns for any siblings? Y/N
- Have medical/health reasons been ruled out as a reason for absence? Y/N
- Have you received medical verification for any of the absences? Y/N
- Are there records of letters sent/phone calls/meetings with parents where attendance is discussed, and actions agreed? Y/N
- Are there records of discussions with the child / young person to get their views on the reasons for absence? Y/N
- Have you had communication with other agencies to address the reasons behind the absence, Y/N
- Were the parents informed when the absences were no longer being authorised (under 93%)? Y/N
- Has bullying been given as a reason for absence? Y/N. If yes, can the school demonstrate they have gone through their school anti-bullying policy Y/N
- Have you explored, offered and/or put in place other strategies to address the attendance issues prior to SAP Y/N

## Appendix 5

Date of Panel:
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**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONTRACT**

Name of Pupil:

DOB:

Address:

School:

Year Group:

**Persons with Parental Responsibility** (even if child is no longer living with them)

Name:

Contact Number:

Email address:

**Present at Meeting:**

Reason for Panel meeting - Failure of parent to ensure child attends school regularly

- Unexplained absences, no evidence / contact with parent
- High level of illness with no medical evidence
- Other .....

Your child's attendance is currently ..... % with ..... sessions of unauthorised absence and ..... late marks

**Action to date via school (tick ensure there is evidence):**

Phone calls to parent [ ]  
Email to parent [ ]  
Letters sent [ ]  
Court Warning letter [ ]  
SAP meeting letter sent [ ]  
Meeting held [ ]  
Referral to external agency (specify agency) .....

Other: .....

**Parental response:**

**School response:**

**School action**

School to only authorise absence due to illness if supported by medical evidence.

School will progress the case with the Education Welfare Officer who will work in partnership with the school and consider prosecution of the responsible parent/s if poor attendance persists.

**Parental action**

Parent/carers name: must:

1. ensure their child attends every day and be on time for Registration
2. provide medical evidence to the school if the child's absence is due to illness
3. contact the school immediately should there be any additional concerns or issues that they wish the panel to consider at their review.

***A review will take place 3 weeks after the School Attendance Panel meeting***

***It is not necessary for you to attend the review unless requested to do so.***

**Date of review: .....**

**Any other action/support**

Early Help ..... (Accepted/Declined)

Ref. School Nurse.....(Accepted/Declined)

Ref. Young Carers..... (Accepted/declined)

Other Intervention (specify).....(Accepted/declined)

**If the pupil named in this agreement does not attend regularly and punctually, the Educational Welfare Officer may;**

- a) Begin a Monitoring Period for .....(Weeks).... (specify timeframe)
- b) Issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 to each parent/carer per child (rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days)
- c) Instruct the Courts Officer to issue a summons against each parent/carer.

***I accept the School Attendance Panel decision's above and agree to comply with the actions. I understand that it is a legal requirement for my child/ren to attend school regularly and punctually, and if I fail to provide evidence for absence and my child/ren do not attend school as required by law, the case will be brought to magistrates court by Lambeth Education Welfare Service.***

\_\_\_\_\_ Signed Parent/ Carer

\_\_\_\_\_ School

\_\_\_\_\_ EWO

\_\_\_\_\_ Other



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**Appendix 5 Covering letter following SAP and attendance contract**

## **School Attendance Panel Contract**

Date **[child's name]**

Dear Parent/ Carer

First let me thank you for attending the School Attendance Panel on the **[date]** to address the issue of your child/children's poor school attendance/ Punctuality. In the Meeting it was stated to you that you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school during the dates and times that it states that is open from. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against you.

The school do appreciate and understand that there are times when circumstances can hamper a child's education. However, it is important that steps are taken to address and overcome these issues; through a positive partnership between the school and more importantly you, solutions can be found so that your child may overcome any barriers to learning and enjoy their education and time at school.

During the meeting you stated the following reasons as to why your child/children's attendance/punctuality is below average: -

As stated above, through partnership working, positive results can be achieved.

Thank you for your co- operation

Laura McPhee  
Headteacher



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**Appendix 6 School Attendance Panel – Failed appointment**

**School Attendance Panel – Failed appointment**

Date:

Dear **[parent/carers name]**,

**Re: School Attendance Panel – Failed appointment**

Unfortunately, you failed to attend the School Attendance Panel offered to you regarding **[child's name]** on **[date]** at **[time]**.

Failure to attend this appointment could lead to the school completing a formal referral to Lambeth's Early Help Team. In these circumstances the meeting is conducted in your absence. As you have parental responsibility for **[child's name]** you are liable for prosecution if you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time, as stated in the Education Act 1996 Section 444.

Please see below for the outcome / read the School Attendance Panel Agreement attached which was agreed in your absence, as it identifies the course of action that we intend to take in partnership with the Local Authority and yourself.

Please sign this agreement and return it to the school so it can be added to your child's educational records. Failure to do this can be used as evidence of non-engagement within any potential legal escalation.

Yours sincerely,  
Laura McPhee

<b>Audience</b>	All Staff, Governors, Parents
<b>Date for renewal/updates/review</b>	Annually
<b>Named person responsible for monitoring</b>	Governors & Headteacher
<b>Ratified by Governors</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020