

Littledean Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

Littledean C of E Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance at school is essential. We believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all children want to be and are keen to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special education need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education elsewhere. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. 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.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect children to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

When reporting pupil absence, contact details are:

Mrs Worgan 01594 822171; admin@littledean.gloucs.sch.uk

Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on '[School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#)'. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2022, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance of the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure that their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child and ensure that the school is informed if there are any changes to contact details
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Only request a leave of absence for their child in exceptional circumstances and in advance
- Positively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

The Governing Board are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it through the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual children or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensure that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handle complaints regarding the implementation of this policy in conjunction with the school's Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Monitoring school-level attendance data and reporting it to Governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Communicating key messages to children and parents/carers
- Signposting targeted intervention and support to children and families
- Where there is lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of potential need for legal intervention
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The School Attendance Office is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team

- Advising the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

School Administration/Office Staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Keeping accurate and up-to-date records of calls and communication with parents
- Contacting parents/carers by 9.15am to check child's whereabouts, if there are been no communication about absence

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and at the start of the afternoon session each day. It will mark whether every child is:

- Present
- Absent (authorised or unauthorised and coded according to DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance')
- Late (arriving late up to 9am when the register closes, after which the U code will be used)
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Children must arrive in school by 8.40am.

The register for the morning register will be taken by 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.10pm (juniors) and 1.30pm (infants).

Absence

The child's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by calling the school by 8.45am.

We will mark the absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

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- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Ongoing punctuality issues may result in a request to issue a Penalty Notice.

Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
- However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a child during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion in line with Government guidance, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an absence due to an unavoidable reason.

Term time holidays are not authorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible via the school office. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the child is attending educational provision.
- Attendance at counselling/therapy sessions

Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the child's parent/carer in the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the school will follow the missing in education protocols (contact police etc..)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input as soon as the reason for the absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

Strategies for improving attendance

- Attendance summaries are sent home with school reports
- Attendance information is shared with parents/carers during parent consultation sessions
- Reminders about the importance of good punctuality and attendance on the weekly newsletters
- Regularly updated attendance display in school entrance

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysis

The school will:

- Inform parents of their child's attendance three times a year
- Monitor attendance and absence data across the school and at an individual level where there are specific concerns/intervention (daily for any children with safeguarding concerns; weekly for classes; termly and annual analysis with comparisons to national data)
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern (i.e. closer monitoring of SEND and pupil premium children as national data trends show that attendance for these groups tends to be below non-SEND and non-pupil premium children)

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at local authority and national level through the DfE's school absence national statistic releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Governing Board to support with attendance target setting.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders (e.g. pupil premium lead, SENDCO, MHL/FSW), to facilitate discussions with children and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

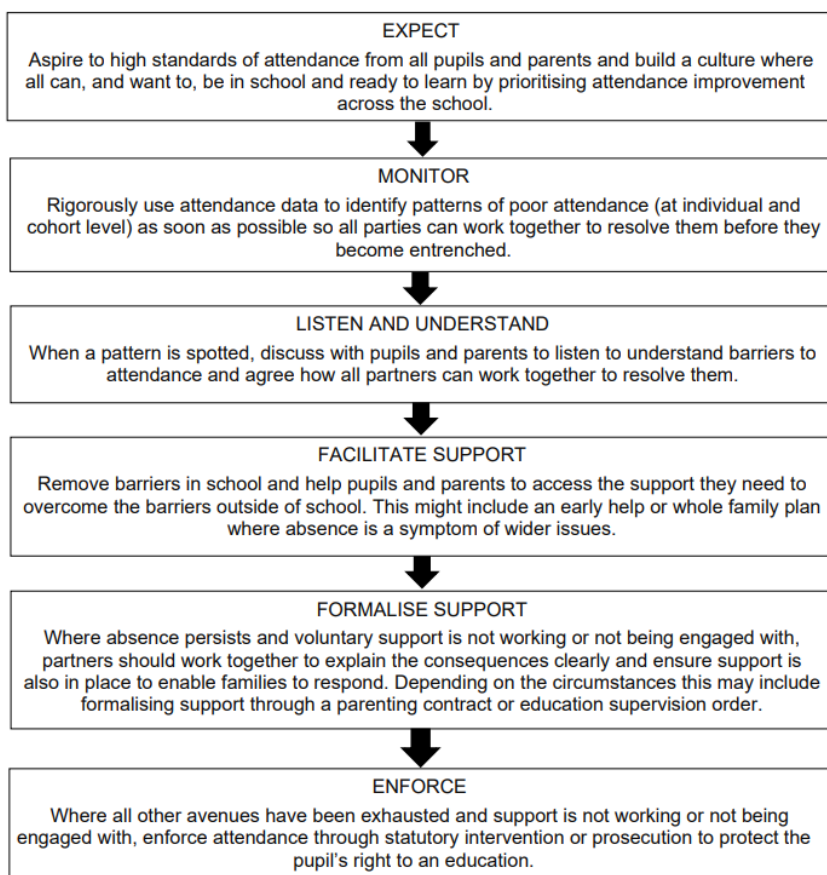
Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school (e.g. an attendance figure of 90% or below).

Severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school (e.g. an attendance figure of 50% or below).

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with parents/carers of children who the school (and/or local authority) consider 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, e.g. Young Minds Matter, school nurse service, school Mental Health Lead etc.....

In line with the DfE's 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', our approach is:



- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social care or early help, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrate's Court.

See appendix for school Attendance Intervention Flowchart.

Legal sanctions

The school can request Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the [Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#).

Criteria for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice:

- Unauthorised holidays during term time (10 sessions of unauthorised absence = 5 school days within a ten week period)
- Consistently arriving late after the register has closed
- Being seen in a public place during the first 5 days or a suspension or exclusion during school hours

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or

withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents/carers against a fixed penalty notice.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child
- Any person who has care of a child or the child lives with and looks after the child

This document should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure and Policy
- Behaviour Regulation Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

Date of Review: June 2024

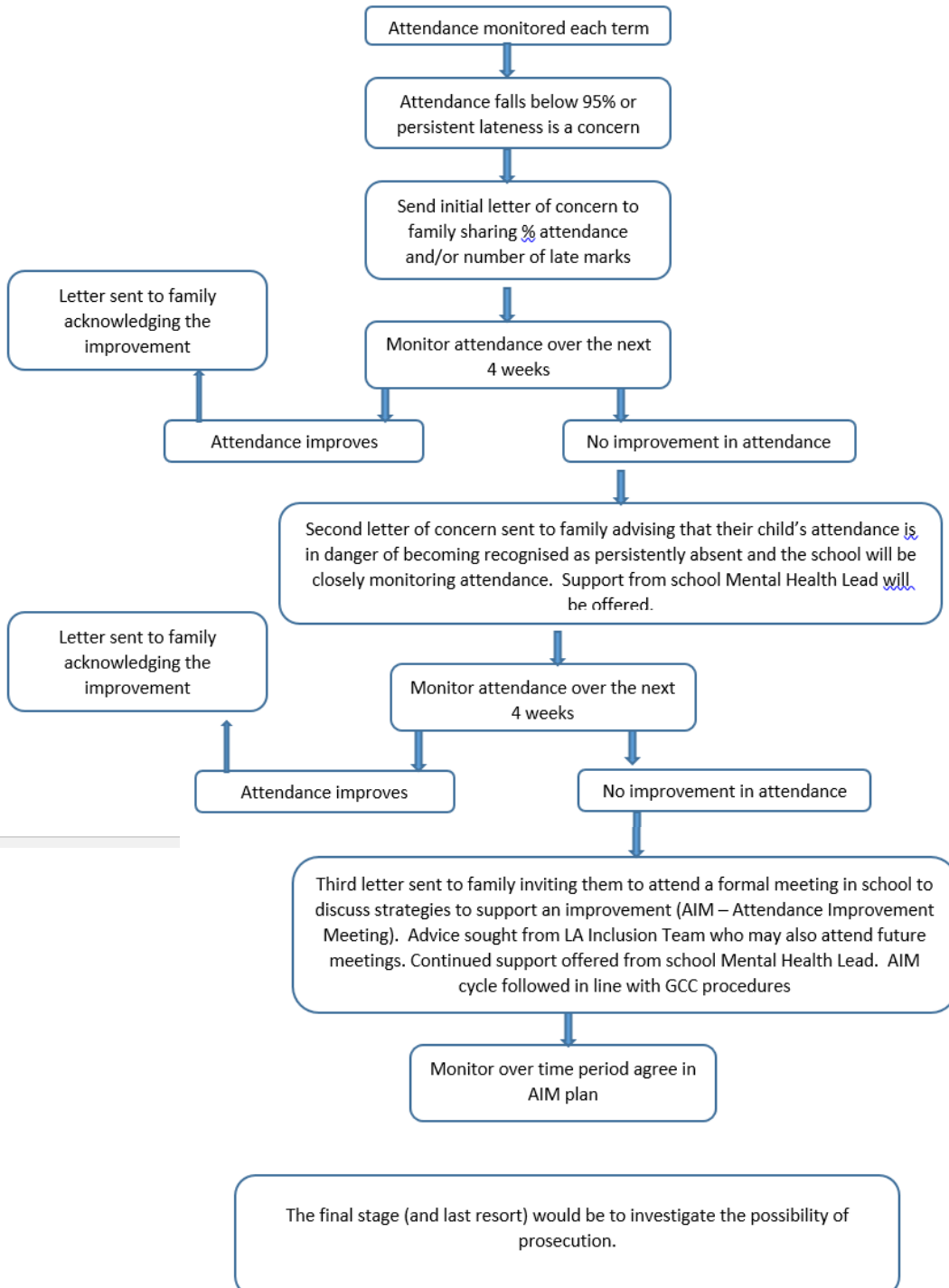
Approved by Full Governing Board October 2024

Date of Next Review: June 2025

Appendices



Attendance Intervention Flowchart



Littledean Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Littledean, Gloucestershire, GL14 3NL

Telephone: 01594 822171

Fax: 01594 825436

Email: admin@littledean.gloucs.sch.uk

Website: www.littledeanprimary.co.uk

X formerly Twitter: @littledeansch



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Request for a leave of absence during term time

Parents should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”.

You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will still miss out on the teaching and learning that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed and arrangements need to be made for individual children to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence, this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence the headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates’ Court.

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the attached form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least seven days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.

Yours sincerely

Hayley McGoldrick

Littledean Church of England Primary School

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Request for a leave of absence during term time

Date:

Pupil NameClass.....

Pupil's address

Date of first day of absenceDate of return to school

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence

.....
.....

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

Name(s) of Parent/Carer (s) making application:

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address:

Signed Dated

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address:

Signed Dated

(Please ensure you are giving at least seven days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorised)

For school to complete and copy retained: AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED (please circle)

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Request for a leave of absence during term time – school response

*This response must be sent to **each** parent and a copy retained by the school*

Date:

Dear.....,

Child's Name..... Class

Your request for absence on the following dates: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

(totalling.....days, has been considered and is

AUTHORISED

UNAUTHORISED

a) Their attendance is currently:.....

b) The request **does / does not** meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'

Please note: An **unauthorised** absence may be notified to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning

Signed..... (Head Teacher)

Date ____ / ____ / ____

Print name: