



Leigh Academy Bearsted

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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November 2022	1.0	Policy Issued
September 2023	1.1	Policy Revised- No changes made
January 2024	1.2	Added paragraph- Removing a pupil off roll Added paragraph- Education for Health Needs including Mental Health
July 2024	1.3	Updated to reflect changes in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024'

1. INTRODUCTION

Leigh Academy Bearsted adheres to the principles and guidance as set out in the DfE publication, “Working together to improve school attendance.” August 2024. The Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is the ***Vice Principal, Mr Tom Leach***.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf

1.1 Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards the academy. To this end, we strive to make our academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

1.2 There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

1.3 The academy is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

1.4 The Education Act 1996 states that:

S.576:

“Meaning of “parent”.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—

(a) who is not a parent of them but who has parental responsibility for them, or (b) who has care of them.”

S.7:

“Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
(b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

S.444:

“Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of

compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence.”

1.5 The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

1.6 There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with the Principal as part of the monitoring and review process.

1.7 The Principal and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body’s objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

1.8 Academy staff are responsible to ensure they promote the academy’s ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enable the academy to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

1.9 Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend the academy regularly and punctually.

1.10 Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

1.11 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the academy encourages and enables good attendance
- How the academy monitors and reviews attendance
- How the academy monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

2. ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING GOOD ATTENDANCE

2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the academy is a place to which the children want to come: that the academy is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at the academy. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the academy and to build and support their children’s enthusiasm for attending the academy.

2.3 All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are

praised.

2.4 Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports at Parent Consultations, attendance is discussed. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE

3.1 The academy will consider annually, in accordance with its support needs in relation to attendance, whether it wishes to purchase a Traded Service from the Kent PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS). The academy will be able to continue to access PIAS Statutory Service in accordance with its referral criteria.

3.2 The academy will log conversations with parents on Bromcom about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

3.3 By law, academies must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The academy will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

3.4 To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the academy may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

3.5 Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.

3.6 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the Administrative Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

3.7 Attendance data is held electronically on Bromcom, accessible by the Trust, Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

3.8 The Principal and Vice Principal monitor the attendance of pupils every week. The flow diagram and letters appended, outline the academy's approach for monitoring and enabling attendance.

3.9 Returns of academy data are made daily to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

3.10 The academy sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

4. PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

4.1 The Principal and Vice Principal monitor the lateness of pupils as being punctual to the academy is crucial. Lateness into the academy causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at the academy on time. The gates open at 8.30 a.m. for all year groups and close at 8:40 am so there is a window of 10 minutes where the children can come into the academy.

4.2 The academy day starts at 8:30 a.m. for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after 08:40 will be recorded as late to school (L code). The Registers close at 9.00 a.m. and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). The Afternoon begins at 1:00 p.m. for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after this will be recorded as late to school (L code). Registers close at 10 mins after the end of lunch respectively. After this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

4.3 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Vice Principal will write to the parents/carers using the appended letter about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

4.4 If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to PIAS.

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

5.1 The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance, and it is a requirement for the Principal to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Principal.

5.2 Wherever possible, parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

5.3 If a child is absent from the academy for any reason the parent must inform the academy on the first day and any following days of absence, stating the reason before 08:30am by calling 01622 250050.

5.4 Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the academy received no reason/explanation or if the academy has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Leave of Absence

6.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

6.2 Principals **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider**

there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

6.3 Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

6.4 Principals will determine how many school days a child may be absent from the academy if the leave is granted.

6.5 The academy can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

6.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

6.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

6.8 All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the PIAS at Kent County Council.

6.9 The Local Authority Attendance Advisory Services may consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for any unauthorised leave of absence in line with the DfE “Working together to improve school.attendance”.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

6.10 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Kent County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996 or prosecution under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

6.11 It is important to note, if holidays are taken during term time without authorisation, a request may be made by the Academy for a Penalty Notice to be issued. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

7. WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

8. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

8.1 Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the academy to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Kent County Council 's via <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance/children-missing-education>

8.2 Reasonable steps to be taken by academy staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at the academy without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other academies/schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through academy contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

8.3 All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

9. Removing a Pupil from Roll

9.1 As per The School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024 - Section 9, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from the academy roll due to continued serious absence.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2024/208/regulation/9/made>

The pupil has not attended the school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period of leave and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances. If unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll.

The pupil has been continuously absent from the school for at least twenty school days and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend

because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances. If unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll.

10. Education for Health Needs including Mental Health

Education for Health Needs Including Mental Health

The Academy will operate according to its statutory duties under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and DfE:

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (***DfE - Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs***).

The Academy will refer to the Local Authority regarding alternative provision where a student cannot attend school full-time for 15 days or more, consecutive or otherwise, due to a physical or mental health need and cannot access full-time education.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, a school may only remove the name of a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from its role in specific circumstances, which include where: - the pupil has been certified by a medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and - Neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

11. IN CONCLUSION

11.1 It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our academy's success.

11.2 Leigh Academy Bearsted greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The Academy is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Leigh Academy Bearsted Flowchart for Attendance Monitoring (escalation process)

MONITOR ATTENDANCE (every half term but more frequently if necessary)

Attendance falls below the expected academy attendance target of 97%

Stage 1 Letter: Send initial letter of concern to parents (include registration certificate*)

Send 'Praise' letter and continue to monitor

Monitor attendance over the next 3 weeks

Attendance Improves

Attendance Declines

Stage 2/3 Letter: Send 2nd/3rd letter to parents* advising that child's attendance is in danger of a persistent absentee, therefore the academy will closely monitor. Parents may be requested to provide medical evidence in order to support absences and the academy will continue to monitor over the next 10 days.

Send 'Praise' letter and continue to monitor

Monitor attendance over the next 10 days

Attendance Improves

Attendance Declines

Stage 4 Letter: Send Letter* inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss strategies to support an improvement (set internal 3 week target, request medical evidence or, offer School Interventions or Early Help if appropriate, record conversation and send letter to parents outlining actions to be taken by the academy and by parents.

Send 'Praise' letter and continue to monitor

Monitor attendance over the next 3 weeks

Attendance Improves

Attendance Declines

Stage 5 Letter: Send letter to parents* advising them that as attendance has not improved despite various supporting strategies, a discussion with PIAS service for possible further intervention.

Registration Codes (includes new)

- / Present (AM) \ Present (PM)
- B Educated off site (NOT at an alternative provision)
- C Other Authorised Circumstances
 - C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
 - C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- D Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made)
- G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
 - J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority (section 19)
- L Late (before registers closed)
- M Medical/Dental appointments
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- P Approved sporting activity
- Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements (travel pass delays via local authority)
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Traveller absence
- U Late (after registers closed)
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience
- X Non-compulsory school age absence
 - Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
 - Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
 - Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
 - Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
 - Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
 - Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
 - Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause (emergency situations only)
- Z Student not yet on roll
- # School closed to students