



L.E.A.D. Academy Trust

Lead • Empower • Achieve • Drive

Attendance Policy

Review frequency: Annual

Approval: Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the Headteacher.

Policy Statement

Introduction

The L.E.A.D. Academy Trust requires this policy to be implemented by all its member academies.

Each academy must have a policy which sets out clearly:

- strategies to promote good attendance
- the procedures for monitoring attendance
- the mechanisms for dealing with poor attendance
- action taken when an absence is unexplained.

It is our intention to ensure that every child and young person enjoys coming to school by providing a stimulating, challenging and secure environment. All pupils will be encouraged to be regular attendees, which will ultimately enhance their learning.

Regular appraisal and monitoring of registers will highlight any issues which may be followed up by written and/or verbal communication with the parents/carers.

Good habits are developed from an early age. It is vital that punctuality is the norm, rather than the exception. It is our policy to encourage and demonstrate the importance of efficient time-keeping for all pupils and this will be communicated through regular contact with parents/carers.

Absences must be kept to a minimum and will be authorised in line with Government Guidelines. Continuity of learning can only take place through regular attendance.

L.E.A.D. Academy Trust recognises and adheres to each relevant local authority's Children and Families Penalty Notices for Truancy, Excluded Pupils, Persistent Lateness and Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time Local Code of Conduct.

Legal Framework

Department of Education guidance on attendance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518586/Advice_on_school_attendance.pdf

Government overview of attendance and absence:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Statutory guidance on Children Missing Education also applies to academies

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/395138/Children_missing_education_Statutory_guidance_for_local_authorities.pdf

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (which made an amendment to the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 Regulations to decrease the period of time parents have to pay a penalty notice) are explained in this document: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/pdfs/ukxiem_20130757_en.pdf

The amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers cannot grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the circumstances are considered exceptional the Headteacher should determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school if leave is granted.

Cross Reference: Safeguarding Policy

At Birley Primary Academy we aim to:

- Achieve 100% attendance for as many pupils as possible.
- Work to maintain a minimum attendance rate of **96.5%**.
- Increase families' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance. In 2014, the DfE has shown that at KS2 SATs:
 - 87% of pupils with 95% and better attendance achieved at least a Level 4;
 - 79% of pupils with 90-95% attendance achieved at least a Level 4;
 - 70% of pupils with 85-90% attendance achieved at least a Level 4;
- In 2014, the DfE has shown that at KS4 GCSE exams:
 - 69% of students with 95% and better attendance achieved 5+ A*-C EM;
 - 53% of students with 90-95% attendance achieved 5+ A*-C EM;
 - 36% of students with 85-90% attendance achieved 5+ A*-C EM
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more enjoyable and satisfying.
- Regular attenders have an easier transition to secondary school, and from secondary school to post-16 and College.

Source: *The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4 – 2013/2014 academic year (March 2016)*

We expect parents/carers to:

- Contact the school on the first morning of all absences as early as possible but at the latest by 9.00am with the reason for the child's absence and stating when the child will return to school. Information will be gathered by office staff using agreed protocols.
- Contact school for each day of a child's absence unless agreed with school otherwise.
- Arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school holidays. Provide school with appointment cards or similar as evidence for absence from school where this is not possible.
- For any absence of children where attendance is below 93% provide school with appropriate medical evidence (doctor's note, prescription, medication).

- For three or more days of absence due to illness, provide school with appropriate medical evidence (doctor's note, prescription, medication).
- Keep school updated by telephone if their child has an extended period of absence due to illness or for any other reason.
- Inform school of any change of contact telephone number.

We will, through our attendance team:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone call or text message as soon as possible. In some instances, we may carry out a home visit.
- Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in regular termly or half termly newsletters as well as on the website.
- Publish the school's attendance rate in newsletters, on the website and in our reports to the Governing Body.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance with prizes, raffles, certificates and letters.
- Challenge poor attendance and punctuality with letters home, home visits, meetings in school and School Attendance Panel Meetings (SAP).
- Publish individual children's attendance rate and punctuality record on their annual report.
- Organise regular meetings to discuss concerns or the concerns of teaching staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues of individual pupils.
- Inform parents/carers if we have any concerns regarding an individual child's attendance. We will regularly monitor these concerns, and will work with families to implement effective strategies to improve their child's attendance.
- Work with other staff and the Leadership Team to implement strategies to improve either individual or class attendance.
- Refer any serious attendance concerns to MAST, who monitor cases regularly to review and support attendance matters, and who will work with families and the child to implement effective strategies to improve either individual or class attendance. MAST will also support us if further sanctions are required (for statutory school age children), such as court orders and fines.
- In FS1, continued poor attendance may lead to a review of your nursery place. This is at the headteacher's discretion.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill (authorisation will be considered based on information provided to school), some medical and dental appointments (where evidence is provided), religious observance, approved sporting activities, educational trips or visits.

We realise that there are *rare* occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes a child to be absent. Parents/carers should inform us of when this occurs and we will aim to deal with it as sympathetically as possible.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery/workman.
- Going for a family day out.
- Sleeping in late after a late night.
- Looking after younger children.
- Going shopping or for a hair cut.
- Because it's a child's birthday.
- Unauthorised holidays.
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered to be unsatisfactory.

Unauthorised absences are monitored by the school so that we can support families in reducing them if it becomes a problem. If unauthorised absences continue, we will consider taking further action which may lead to parents being asked to attend School Attendance Panel (SAP) meetings. In some cases, for children who are statutory school age, further legal action may be taken against parents, which in turn may lead them to facing prosecution by the courts or having to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine).

Penalty Notice Holiday Fine

If parents/carers take their children on holiday during term time for 5 or more consecutive school days (spanning over holiday periods or weekends, would constitute consecutive school days) and this is not authorised by the School, they can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 (if paid in 21 days) or £120 (if paid between 21 and 28 days). Each parent/carer can be issued with a notice, one per parent per family, i.e. one fine per parent/carer per family, regardless of the number of children in the family.

The responsibility for requesting Penalty Notice Holiday Fines is with the school and will be issued when requested by the Head Teacher, **unless it would not be in the public interest to do so, child is under statutory school age or incomplete/missing information on requests.**

Punctuality

- Morning registration starts at 8.45am. This is the time that children must be in the classroom, so parents/carers need to ensure their child is ready to be collected by 8.40am.
- It is important for children to be on time as the first part of the learning day is used to give out instructions, organise schoolwork for the rest of the day and to start learning.
- If a child misses this short but vital session, their learning for the whole day will be affected. Late arrivals disrupt the whole class and it can often be very embarrassing for the child.
- Arrival after 8.50am will be marked as late, and children arriving 30 minutes after the start of the school day will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code) in line with the DfE (Department for Education) guidance, unless you contact us. Children arriving

late must be brought in through the main reception in order to be registered at the office. Parents will be asked for a reason for their child's lateness.

- We will contact parents/carers if we have any concerns about a child's punctuality and will try and work with the parents to improve this.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of the timetabled day will be referred to a place of safety within school. Usually parents/carers inform us if there is going to be a problem with collection, however if this does not happen they will be asked to do so in the future. If late collection of children occurs, parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting where they will be informed that if this type of behaviour continues, then other agencies, e.g. Sheffield City Council Family Services will be contacted and asked to collect the child.

Attendance strategy

We promote attendance in school – both individual and class attendance through regular rewards and encouragement.

- Class attendance is celebrated weekly in assembly where the class with the highest attendance wins 'Top Dog' and the next 2 classes with highest attendance win an attendance dog each to look after for the week.
- Individual attendance is rewarded with a certificate half termly for children achieving 100% in that half term. For children maintaining 100%, termly certificates and prizes are given. At the end of the school year, children with 100% attendance are rewarded with an overall attendance prize.
- Attendance certificates are also given to reward children who show improved attendance throughout the year.

Family Holidays, Leave of Absence and Exceptional Circumstances

We are always concerned about the amount of school time children miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed for exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher in accordance with 2013 DfE legislation.

Children are expected to be educated for 190 days each school year leaving 175 days in school holidays available for taking family holidays.

It is our policy:

- That only in exceptional circumstances will holidays be allowed and then only up to a maximum of ten days. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application)
- A Notification of Absence in Term Time form MUST be completed by parents/carers if they want to request an absence for their child from school.
- That parents/carers wishing to apply for exceptional circumstances leave of absence in term-time need to fill in a Notification of Absence in Term Time request form well in advance and at least 20 days before taking the holiday, otherwise it will be classed as unauthorised.

- The headteacher will consider any requests and advise the parents/carers of the decision (possibly asking to meet with them to discuss the situation). The request will be considered and a decision letter will be sent to parents/carers within 10 days.
- Exceptional Term time leave of absence requests must include specific start and end dates, as this formally constitutes the leave period. Where no dates are provided, then the request cannot be considered or granted.
- Any changes to dates agreed by the school will require a re-submission for authorisation prior to departure.
- No applications for leave of absence will be considered for the start of any academic year e.g September, as it is very unsettling for a child to miss the start of the new school year. In addition, no authorisation will be given for any children to take holidays during the SATS period (usually a full week in May).
- If we do not agree to a leave of absence and a parent/carer takes the child on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) if attendance falls below 90%.
- If a child's attendance falls below 90% at any point, you may also be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for low attendance.
- The school **MUST** be informed of any leave of absence during term time. If we suspect that a child is on holiday, and school have not had prior notification, a home visit may be carried out and a fine may be issued if attendance is below 90%. Similarly, if it is reported that a child is ill, and school have evidence to suggest that a child is on holiday, further action will be considered.
- The headteacher's decision is final.

School Leavers

If a child is leaving the school, other than at the end of Year 6 to go to secondary school parents/carers are asked to:

- Complete a Sheffield City Council Transfer Form, (a green and white form which is available from Sheffield City Council and school office), giving the school full information about their plans including:
 - Date of move;
 - Leaving date;
 - New address;
 - Reasons for moving.
 - Name of new school;
- Confirm the school has the parents/carers current contact phone number.

If moving to a school or academy outside of Sheffield we ask for the same information and the proposed name of a school that has been approached to admit your children. This is to ensure a smooth transition and hand over of documentation to the receiving school.

We do appreciate parents/carers notifying us of any decisions made regarding an application to move schools.

School Admissions

When an application to the Council's Admissions Service has been completed and a place has been allocated, the school will be notified and we will ensure that we:

- Speak to parents/carers to organise a tour of the school, transition into school and confirm the admission date.

- Speak to the previous school about the child's attendance record at that school.
- Speak to the previous school about any problems the child may be experiencing so that s/he can be supported when s/he starts.
- Speak to the previous school about any problems the family might be experiencing so that the family can be supported when the child starts.
- Arrange for the relevant documents to be transferred efficiently between the two schools.
- Follow up any relevant documents which are not transferred within an appropriate timescale.

Children Missing from Education

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016** set out new regulations which came into force on **1 September 2016** and apply to all schools and Local Authorities in England.

When children leave, or go on extended holidays/visits, and parents/carers have not given the school the above information, and cannot be contacted, then the child is considered to be a child missing from education. This means that the school has a legal duty to carry out investigations. These will include liaising with Sheffield City Council Children Missing from Education Service, Family Services, the Police, and other agencies in order to try to locate the child and ensure that s/he is safe. When all investigations have been carried out, we are advised by the Children Missing from Education team of further actions, i.e. removing a child from the school's roll.

The new law requires all schools (including independent schools) to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform their Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school roll or delete them from the admission register under <u>all fifteen grounds.</u> See Appendix A.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record details of the pupil's residence, the name of the person with whom they will reside, the date from which they will reside there and the name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform their Local Authority of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school; and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to their Local Authority when registering new pupils within 5 days, including the pupil's new address and previous school (where they can reasonably obtain this information).

The new requirements also give Local Authorities the **discretion** to require the same information on children leaving or joining schools at **standard admission points**, i.e. at the start of Reception, Year 3 (Separate Junior Schools) and Year 7 and at the end of the final year of school.

Appendix A

Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register

	Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
1	8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.

6	<p>8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that —</p> <p>(i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;</p> <p>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</p> <p>(iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</p>
7	<p>8(1)(g) - that he is certified by the school 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 he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.</p>
8	<p>8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and —</p> <p>(i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);</p> <p>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</p> <p>(iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</p>
9	<p>8(1)(i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.</p>
10	<p>8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.</p>
11	<p>8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and—</p> <p>(i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or</p> <p>(ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.</p>
12	<p>8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.</p>
13	<p>8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.</p>

14	8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
15	8(1)(o) where— (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

L.E.A.D. Academy Trust Attendance Bands

**100%
only**

Band 1

Blue (rewards, recognition and extended privileges)

No action required. A range of rewards & privileges available and the best chance of your child fulfilling their full potential.

**95%
Above**

Band 2

Green (rewards and recognition)

If your child attends school above 95% of the time they will receive regular positive recognition, a range of rewards and above all the best opportunity to achieve academic success.

**95%
to
92.5%**

Band 3

Amber 1 (contact home)

If your child's attendance falls into this band their pastoral lead will contact you to discuss any barriers to good attendance and offer support to improve attendance. If attendance continues to fall then a letter will be sent home.

**92.5%
to
90%**

Band 4

Amber 2 (attendance concern meeting)

If your child's attendance falls into this band, a letter will be sent inviting you to an attendance concern meeting with the pastoral lead. At this meeting barriers to good attendance will again be discussed, improvement actions agreed and attendance targets set.

**90%
to
86%**

Band 5

Red 1 (attendance panel meeting)

If your child's attendance falls into this band you will be invited to attend an academy attendance panel meeting. At the meeting will be a member of the academy senior leadership team and the Academy attendance officer. This is the final opportunity to demonstrate an ability to improve attendance before moving towards the prosecution stage.

**Below
86%**

Band 6

Red 2 (Local Authority pre-prosecution meeting)

If there are no improvements within the timescale agreed at the Academy Attendance Panel Meeting, a pre-prosecution panel meeting with the Authority Attendance Service will be conducted. Final targets for improvement will be set and prosecution procedures explained. If the final targets are still not met then the Authority Attendance Service will move to prosecute.

