Long Marston VA C of E Attendance Policy
Date approved: April 2023
Renewal date: April 2026

Attendance Policy

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children and young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and will strive to raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of our pupils. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where our pupils will want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Aims/Expectations

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Attendance Targets

- to keep whole school attendance above 96%.

Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Expectations to be considered when developing Policy

Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools	- Ensure an effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities. - Offer a clear vision for high attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.

	• Have a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out in this model policy. • Regularly review and understand attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders to focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it the most within school. • Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. • Make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe. • Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance. • Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance. • Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance. • Have a designated attendance champion in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan. • Make sure staff receive training/professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively. • Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools within Trusts.
Role of the Head	The Head is responsible for: ▪ Having a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out in this model policy and ensuring the implementation of this policy – ensuring compliance with DfE Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – Working together to improve School Attendance – September 2022 - Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) ▪ Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2022, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2022 - Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.
- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, LA's and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.

- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensuring all staff members:

  - treat pupils with dignity
  - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
  - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
  - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
  - deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
  - use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
  - regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
  - establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness.
- Monitoring implementation of policy and practice, for example through form time, drop in, shadow late gate, planner checks
- Engaging community businesses, partners and residents to promote attendance and report non-attendance.
- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME

Ensuring compliance with guidance regarding Children Missing Education - see Herts Grid

- Engaging pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions

  o Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
  o Robust school systems which provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
    - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
    - young carers
    - children who are eligible for free school meals
    - children who speak English as a second language
    - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
  o Keeping all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures
  o compiling attendance data for the, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO).
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the LAAO is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- School attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support policies which should clearly outline:
  o the key principles
  o rules pupils need to follow
  o routines
  o consequence systems
- If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families,

	implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
	▪ The escalation of procedures to address absence needs to be:
	  o understood by pupils, parents and carers
	  o implemented consistently
	  o reviewed regularly
	
	• ensuring that the Local Authority is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly via a **10 Day Absence Form**.
	See guidance on HCC Grid for form –
	https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-guidance-and-statutory-responsibilities

Role of the Teaching Staff	Teachers are responsible for: ▪ Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance. ▪ Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently. ▪ Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date; ▪ Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns; ▪ Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns; ▪ Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance. ▪ Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy. ▪ Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school. ▪ Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. ▪ Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school. ▪ Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.

- Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:

  o treat pupils with dignity
  o build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  o take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively
  o understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
  o communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

You should:
- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress and apply them consistently
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils

Pupils at risk of severe or persistent absence – good practice recommendations (this list is not exhaustive)
- Welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:
  ➢ lesson resources
  ➢ buddy support
  ➢ one to one input
  ➢ meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
  ➢ establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets. This could include:
  ➢ lunchtime arrangements
  ➢ support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing
  ➢ lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
  ➢ make regular contact with families to discuss progress

	- consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups - prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return - develop targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence (including considering small group additional support) - contribute to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate - provide tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time
Office Assistant	Expectations: - To ensure the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate. - To ensure robust day-to-day processes are in place. - To track and follow up absence and poor punctuality (implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures). - Provide appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice. - Carry out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding. - Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents to understand why and when the pupil will return. - Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance register the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session. - Where reasonably possible, ensure school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. - Keep parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided. For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning). - Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals. - Identify and, where possible, mitigate potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies. - Implement children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate -

- See guidance on HCC Grid regarding Children Missing Education, https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education
- Where pupils have additional vulnerabilities, which may require multi-agency meetings try to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible.
- Engage with feeder schools or organisations to access absence information in order to identify target cohorts prior to transfer, including mid-year transfers and managed moves.
- Send letters to all parents who request term-time holiday (authorised and unauthorized).

Pupils at risk of persistent absence
- Provide regular attendance reports to parents and teachers.
- Initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures.

This should include:
  - ➢ letters home
  - ➢ engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
  - ➢ work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard-to-reach families and find methods that work and are understood
  - ➢ consideration as to whether further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
  - ➢ provide regular reports to the Head teacher
  - ➢ provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority

Pupils who are persistently absent
- Communicate daily attendance to SLT via email.
- Liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments
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Expectations of parents	Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.
	• Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school every day school is open.
	Parents are responsible for:
	➢ ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
	➢ instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
	➢ impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
	➢ informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.15 am at the latest.
	➢ providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
	➢ informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
	➢ taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
	➢ working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
	➢ proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support.
	➢ If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
	➢ booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
	➢ only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
	➢ treating staff with respect
	➢ actively supporting the work of the school
	➢ calling staff for help when they need it
	➢ communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support
Working with the Local Authority	▪ Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
	▪ The Headteacher will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
	▪ Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.

	- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO. - If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority. - Statutory intervention can include: ➢ Parenting Contract ➢ Parenting Order ➢ Education Supervision Order ➢ Prosecution
Encouraging Good Attendance	The school encourages good attendance by: - Using clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences. Makes sure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils. - publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body. - Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided. For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
Punctuality	- The School doors open at 8.40 (please amend as required) - The register will be open for no longer than 20 minutes after the session begins. - Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9.00 and parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session. - Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U). - School may arrange a meeting with parents to discuss concerns so that the problem can be addressed.
Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence	School is expected to: - proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. - Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

	- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified. - If the issue persists, take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners. - Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. - Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.
Pupils who are persistently absent	Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue. School is expected to: - Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent. - Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. - If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. - Where support is not working or being engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention. - If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. - Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.
Pupils who are severely absent	Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%. School is expected to: - Continue support as for pupils who are persistently absent. - Agree a joint approach for all pupils who are severely absent with the Local Authority. **Pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and teachers must ensure this cohort is made the top priority for action and support.** **You must be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.** **Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that school ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable**

	support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.
Absence	Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed. • Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence). • Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.
Part-time Timetables	• As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable. • The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday) • All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable. **Follow guidance from HCC Grid when considering a part-time timetable** - https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students

Monitoring	We believe this policy will be effective only if it is consistently monitored across the whole school.
Headteacher Signature:	Laura Whateley
Chair of Governing Body Signature:	Jane Bannister
Date approved:	April 23
Review date:	April 26

Further resources / Statutory guidance

- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures
- Children missing education
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school
- Keeping children safe in education
- School exclusion

Guidance and resources

- National statistics: Pupil absence in schools in England