

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

For the purpose of this policy Leighton Academy is referred to as the school.

This policy was developed through a process of consultation with the relevant professionals.

It will be reviewed annually.

### **LEGISLATION**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”*.

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that *“if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”*. Therefore regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For the purposes of Education Law the definition ‘parental responsibility’ lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents or carer/s.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To ensure that all learners attend school regularly, aiming for 100% attendance or as close as possible.
- To ensure that all learners are punctual.
- To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend every school day and they arrive on time.
- To keep good electronic records of attendance through school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To investigate and act immediately where unauthorised absence is confirmed or suspected.
- To work effectively with other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvement.

## **Consultation Process:**

- **School Staff:**

The attendance group will be invited to a staff meeting to discuss this policy and make any changes, which are deemed supportive of the aims of the policy.

- **The Governing Body:**

The attendance group will be invited to a policy meeting to discuss this policy and make any changes which are deemed supportive of the aims of the policy. The final policy, after consultation will be presented for approval to the whole governing body.

- **The Parent(s)/Carer(s)**

**Parents(s)/Carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- When their children first start at our school
- Home/School contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evening
- In the school brochure
- In the annual governors' report to parent(s)/carer(s)
- On the school website

- **The children or young people:**

**Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum

## **PROCEDURE**

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a learner's absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

Parents will be asked to telephone or notify the school, every day that their child is absent or ill as part of fulfilling the schools safeguarding requirements. The school office will make telephone contact with home when a child is absent and the parent has not notified the school of the absence. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.

**It is essential for the school to have up to date contact numbers.**

## **COMPLETING THE REGISTER**

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents that have to be marked twice daily. The register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school. The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department of Education. One school day is marked as two sessions, a.m. and p.m.

## **MEDICAL ABSENCES**

Any medical absences in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. This does not have to be a doctor's note but can be prescriptions, medication, or appointment cards. If no medical evidence is received then the absence will be coded as unauthorised.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE – FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

Parents/carers should be aware that Leighton Academy may contact Cheshire East Borough Council (Educational Welfare Service) if a pupil has 5 days (10 sessions) or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The penalty notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

<b>Penalties for unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One child</b>	<b>Two children</b>
<b>Paid within 21 days</b>	£60 per parent – initially	£60 per child - £120 per parent
<b>After 21 days and before 28 days</b>	£120 per parent	£120 per child - £240 per parent
<b>After 28 days</b>	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance

## **LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY**

Registers are taken at 9.00a.m. It is essential that children are settled in school by 8.50a.m. Children arriving late, after 9.20a.m will be coded 'U' which equates to an unauthorised absence.

## **APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES- LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that the principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The principal should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only and will be granted at the discretion of the Principal.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- The death of a close member of the family\*
- To attend a wedding of a close family member\*.

\*at the discretion of the Principal

Evidence would be required in each case where this is deemed appropriate.

It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to Cheshire East Borough Council for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

## **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

### **Rewards**

- Friday achievement assemblies. Classes are presented with their weekly attendance.
- A certificate is given to the class with the best attendance
- Around school and in classrooms a 'traffic light system' (red, amber, green) operates, whereby children know what their class attendance is.
- Attendance letters sent out when patterns are noted or if a child arrives late on more than 5 occasions in one term.
- Attendance meetings with parents if things do not improve
- Referral to the education welfare officer if a child is late more than 10 times or their % attendance drops below 95%

## **WHAT CAN PARENTS/CARERS DO TO HELP?**

Let the school know immediately why your child is absent. Contact must be made with school each day that your child is absent by phone or text (using the School Gateway App on your smart phone). Communication with school is extremely important in supporting your child. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

It is essential that the school have up to date contact numbers.

## **IF PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL WHAT CAN THEY DO?**

You can talk to Zoe Dyer, pastoral and welfare manager.

Talk to the principal or class teacher.

Each school has a designated Education Welfare Officer who can be contacted through school.

Website: [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ews](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ews)

## **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)**

Children Missing Education are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll or not receiving a suitable full time education either at alternative provision or at home (Elective Home Education). The CME service are committed to ensuring that children who are CME are safe, that they know where they are and that they can help them back to a suitable educational facility. Children are classed as CME if:

- they are absent from school for 10 or more days without reasonable explanation
- they left school suddenly and their destination is unknown.
- they have not taken up an allocated school place

Leighton Academy will report a child CME if no contact can be made with a family as to where their child is being educated after 10 days missing from school.

## **OVERVIEW OF LEIGHTON ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement. Leighton Academy will strive to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in some cases. This attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.