

# LEIGHTON ACADEMY NEWSLETTER



Minshull New Road, Crewe, CW1 3PP  
Telephone numbers  
School 01270 685185  
Fax 01270 251086  
Email : [head@leighton.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:head@leighton.cheshire.sch.uk)  
Principal : Glyn Turner

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## Principal's Newsletter

### Governing Body

**After** excellent service and commitment as a governor – most recently as chair and trustee – Martin Gillett has decided to leave the governing body to focus on his family, work and other interests. Martin has been an outstanding governor, giving freely of his time whilst supporting and challenging in equal measure. As always, Martin has put the needs of the academy first by ensuring there is a succession plan in place. I cannot thank Martin enough for his personal support for me and for the professional support offered to the school when he first arrived as a governor and our governance arrangements were experiencing many issues. He has challenged and supported the work of the operational staff with distinction and merit. I am sure the governors will be in touch following the appointment of a replacement for Martin at a meeting in November. Meanwhile he will continue to act as chair until the selection process has been completed by the governors.

**We** are pleased to announce the appointment of Steve Hall and Helen Morris. Helen is a very experienced governor and will bring extensive knowledge and skills to the role. Although Steve's children attended the school, they have moved to high school and beyond. Steve has extensive knowledge of personnel, health/safety and logistical issues. Both governors will bring objectivity, commitment, enthusiasm and challenge to the role.

I am also pleased to welcome Rebecca Stubbs as a parent governor following the recent election on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

**As** governors play such an important role in running the academy it is worth reminding parents that contact can be made through the following email address:

[governor@leighton.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:governor@leighton.cheshire.sch.uk)

**If** the matter is confidential, or you wish to pursue an issue via one of the procedures published on the website, then please write to the chair of governors using the academy address and endorsing the envelope 'private and confidential.'

### Publication of Minutes

**The** minutes of the governors' meetings are published and available to parents on request. You are entitled to see the non-confidential section of the minutes so please feel free to request a copy. There would be a very small charge to cover any photocopying of a hard copy. We have provided a display facility in the entrance hall for some academy documents and policies although most of the key policies are accessible through the website.

## **Website**

**We** are always looking to improve communication through technology. Twitter and our website are proving useful tools in trying to update parents. The calendar on the website is valuable especially when it comes to activities such as clubs, helping to reaffirm the dates and times on the letter and permission slip. Please check the dates when the clubs are finished.

**The** most recent attendance policy is now available from the school. However, to ensure there is no confusion I am attaching a copy with this newsletter. We have contracted the services of an experienced educational welfare officer to ensure our policy is compliant with recent legislation regarding leave of absence in term time. Please note the sections regarding definitions of exceptional circumstances and the processes for medical absences.

## **Harvest Assembly**

**Thank** you for your generosity in providing food items for this assembly. Some may regard such an occasion as old-fashioned but all of the food will be used locally to provide for those in need. As always, our community continues to show compassion and consideration for others.

## **A Touch of Nostalgia**

**A** new feature of our newsletter will be a nostalgic section to maintain our academy's links with the past. The aerial photograph included in this edition was taken in May 1969. It shows a reduced number of entrances and not one tree on the whole site – note also the lack of a path around the school and no roundabout at the front entrance. We are sure the children will find other differences. It is unlikely there were too many parking issues in those days! We have also looked in the log book to examine snapshots of entries from September/October 1953, 1963, 1973 and 1983. The log book entries provide an insight into the life of our predecessor school and the minutiae of day to day life – often reflective of the issues we face today. Some of the entries may seem trite but we hope you enjoy the trips back in time.



**In** September 1953 the headteacher reported the closure of the school on the 11<sup>th</sup> September for a fortnight as it was the autumn holiday. After closing on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1953 for the midsummer holiday, the children had returned on the 5<sup>th</sup> August. This is a very topical subject given the recent government legislation which prevents headteachers from authorising leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**In** October 1963 the poor caretaker had damaged his wrist 'while stoking a boiler.' Hopefully our site officer finds the gas heating system easier to operate. A major project for the academy this year is the purchase of modern and efficient gas boilers as part of our commitment to a sustainable future and building on the recent solar energy installation.

**In** 1973 five teachers were absent with illness during one week. Of course in those days there would be no return to work interviews to complete with rigorous monitoring of absence rates. The head would have telephoned the area office to recruit temporary supply teachers with the cost coming out of a 'pot' of money at Cheshire County Council.

**Good** fun and learning for the children was on offer in 1983 as the children enjoyed a visit from Bobo the road safety clown. In those days it was easier to accommodate the 241 children on roll in the school hall (420 today). This issue still resonates as I have seen some of the data indicating the speed of vehicles passing the academy!!

**Picking** up the harvest theme from earlier in the newsletter, it was interesting to note the outcome for the Harvest Festival in 1959 resulted in "... a fine collection of gifts of flowers, fruit, dry goods etc which we shall send to sick scholars, homes for old people, the orphanage...."

### **Congratulations**

**The** academy has been awarded achievement awards for its PE provision and the geography gold award for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. Thank you to Ms Brennand and Mr Preston for their hard work in driving achievements in these curriculum areas. The links with the Geographical Association are very important as Mr Preston – following on from Mrs Hardman's earlier work – has been involved in a pilot linking the award with a global learning dimension.

### **October Holiday**

**A** reminder the school will be closed for half-term from Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October for one week. It will re-open on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October.

## **LEIGHTON ACADEMY**

### **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.

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013

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 well, 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 10 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 28 days</b>	£120 per parent	£120 per child - £240 per parent
<b>If fine is still not paid</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 9a.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.

### **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 e.g. grandparent, parent or sibling.

To attend a wedding of a grandparent, parent or older sibling.

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.

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

Let the school know immediately why your child is absent. 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 Rachael Dyer, Family Support Coordinator (01270) 685285 ext5

Talk to the principal or class teacher.

Each school has a designated Education Welfare Officer who can be contacted through school. You can also telephone the main office (01270) 375277.

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

## **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.