

LONG FURLONG PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Each child is an important member of Long Furlong School, and so it is recognised that:

- Pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with peer groups and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of the community.
- Some pupils and their parents/guardians may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/guardians to ensure attendance at school, as required by law.

Why is Attendance Important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring each child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents and carers, and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents and carers, pupils, and all members of school staff.

EXPECTATIONS

Long Furlong School expects from our parents/guardians and pupils that:

- Pupils will attend school regularly
- Parents/guardians will contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend school
- A parent/guardian will notify the school, in advance, of any planned absence
- Pupils will arrive on time and be adequately prepared for the day
- Parents/guardians will contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- They will work in partnership with the school to address difficulties
- They will ensure they comply with statutory responsibilities

Parents/guardians may expect the following from Long Furlong School:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance (the registers will be completed once at the beginning of the school day and again after the lunch break)

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- Early contact with parents/guardians when a pupil fails to attend without providing good reason
- Immediate action on any problem notified to us
- Referral of specific issues to supporting agencies where appropriate
- Access to Attendance Policy

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a pupil does not attend when expected, the school needs to respond effectively:

- Where contact is not received from parents/guardians by 9:30 a.m. on the first day of absence, administrative staff will telephone/text/email a parent/guardian asking for contact to be made with school as soon as possible. If no contact is received by 10am other parental and emergency contacts for the pupils will be contacted.
- Where there is no response, the headteacher will make an appropriate decision which may include a home visit or contact with another agency.
- Where there is no response to the school intervention, the school must consider a referral to the appropriate agency.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the "PA" threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and parents be informed of this immediately. Pupils who become a persistent absentee, and their parents, may be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. Some cases are also made known to the County Attendance team. Parents will be contacted if a child becomes a PA pupil, and we may seek their consent to complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and consider convening a Team Around the Family (TAF) involving the support of Social Services and/ or health agencies.

LIAISING WITH VARIOUS AGENCIES WHEREVER APPROPRIATE

Good relations and working practices are essential. Agencies have difficult roles in that they endeavour to support the school in meeting its legal obligations as well as supporting home and pupil to ensure that the latter's educational opportunities are maximised to the full. Some parents/guardians need the support of these agencies so that they can fulfil their legal obligations to their children.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Statutory responsibilities on parents/guardians, governing bodies, head teachers and the Local Authority relating to the registration of pupils and the attendance of pupils at school are derived from the following regulations:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434(1) (3) (4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (KCSIE, annually updated)

The statutory frameworks outlined above include clear guidance in relation to how, where and when attendance issues should be addressed but also places statutory responsibility on all those in the education arena to ensure that all aspects of these regulations are adhered to. This includes clear and appropriate guidance on the registration of pupils and in particular on the correct symbols to be used for registration purposes.

Procedures have been outlined for dealing with registration and unauthorised absence but a significant contributor to the absence rates from schools is often the authorisation of that absence for extended leave and in particular for holiday absence.

Exceptional Leave during Term Time

The 2013 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 clear that headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where parents/guardians wish to remove their child from school, they should complete the Notification of Absence form. This will be returned indicating if the absence is authorised or not. Parents/guardians and carers may discuss the matter with the headteacher before or after submitting the form.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive

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a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

Children Below Statutory School Age

Some of the children in our Nursery and Reception classes are below statutory school age. However, regular attendance is still important to enable the children to thrive and to establish good habits. We would still expect parents/guardians to complete the Notification of Absence form.

Late Arrival

Punctuality is important to ensure all children have a good, settled start to their day and to establish good habits for the future. We have a “soft arrival time” where gates are opened at 8.45am and pupils are expected in class by 8.55am.

Arrival after the register has been taken is marked as ‘Late’ (after 9.10 a.m. and 1:15pm) and ‘Late (after registers closed)’ (after 9:30am and 1:30pm). If a child is ‘Late (after registers closed)’, the absence is unauthorised.

REINTEGRATION

It is recognised that for some pupils there may be periods when they will be absent from school for extended periods. Reasons for this absence can be numerous and may include:

- Extended periods of unauthorised absence due to extended periods of truancy
- Extended absence due to illness/injury
- Extended periods of absence for holidays

In any circumstance where a pupil has had extended absence, the school will work to enable the pupil to re-engage successfully with the education system. To this end, for pupils who are being re-integrated to school - and especially for those who dropped out because of disaffection with the system -

The schools would expect to consider reintegration packages, which might include:

- Planned, staged re-admission on a time limited basis
- Identifying and providing a mentor (usually the pupil’s class teacher) to provide help, guidance and support to address difficulties
- Provision of additional work to enable the pupil to catch up
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the pupil’s return and are supportive and encouraging to this return
- Regular reviews of progress with appropriate attendance from family, child and support services

Long Furlong school recognises that, if conducted appropriately, a reintegration package for a pupil returning after absence for any reason can raise individual achievement and therefore assist with overall school performance.