



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Date Published:** September 2017

**Version:** V4

**Author:** A. Ives

**Review Date:** September 2018

## **1. Introduction**

Excellent school attendance is essential in enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Linden Road values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-bullying, Behaviour and Teaching and Learning.

## **2. Legal Framework**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 18.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a student has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any term (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive a Penalty Notice of £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Attendance of 90% or below is categorised as Persistent Absence.

This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

### 3. Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a **satisfactory** explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

**Authorised Absence** will be categorised as follows:

- **Illness** Parents/carers should telephone school prior to the start of the school day 8.50 a.m. to inform school that their child is ill, a voice mail can be left. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. Where necessary the child will be referred to the School Nurse.
- **Medical Appointments** Parents should make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for as much of the school day as possible. Parents must show the appointment card to school. Where a student has an on-going medical need this will fall under the Medical Needs Policy.
- **Other Authorised Circumstances** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.
- **Fixed Term Exclusion (No alternative provision made)** Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- **Holidays in term time** Linden Road operates a zero tolerance on holidays or suspected holidays within term time unless under agreed exceptional circumstances. If parents take students on holiday during term time this absence will be unauthorised.

#### **Examples of exceptional circumstances:**

- Serious illness of a close family member
- Funerals of close family member
- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Representation in national or county sports or performing arts events or similar
- Other exceptional family circumstances

Parents wishing to request Leave of Absence during term time must send a written request to the principal before any arrangements are made, explaining the nature of the request and the exceptional circumstances as to why this leave has to take place during term time. This form can be collected from the school office. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being

categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will only be approved if the circumstances are exceptional. The following factors will also be taken into account before any decision is made:

- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the student
- The student's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SAT's and public examinations
- Student's ability to catch up on the work missed
- Student's educational needs
- General welfare of the student
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous leave of absence taken during term time
- When the request was made
- Cultural needs and family circumstances (such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin)

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter will state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still takes leave from school, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school will instruct the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

- **Religious Observance** Linden Road acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that **no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year**. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

- **Traveller Absence** The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school regularly.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

Linden Road will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the student's school place at Linden Road will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Linden Road can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student.

#### **4. Punctuality**

Registration begins at 8.55 a.m., students are encouraged to be in their classrooms at 8.50 a.m. students arriving after 9am will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at **9.25am** students arriving after this will be classed as late and it will count as an absence for that school session, an unauthorised absence.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment (with evidence).

**Unauthorised absence due to poor punctuality** this absence will be **unauthorised** unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Missing the bus
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "We woke up late"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Child wouldn't behave/wouldn't get ready
- Child tired – got back late from holiday, had a sleep over
- We live far away

## **5. Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools  
Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

Linden Road will follow the local authorities: Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown. It is their responsibility under the Education regulations act 2006

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

Linden Road believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community. As such, we will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings via the Well-Being Report.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance: This is Andrea Ives, Principal.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions through Quality of Provision Meetings and Well-Being Reports.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families through Quality of Provision meetings and the Pastoral Manager
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Teachers to ensure registers are completed correctly and returned to the office within 5 minutes of the bell.

### Admin staff

- Check registers at beginning of the school day and after lunch to establish which children are absent.
- Phone parents of absent children if school has not been informed
- If school is not notified why a child has been absent, send a letter asking for a reason.
- If parent does not respond, send a letter to say absence has not been authorised.
- Monitor punctuality and attendance and keep parents informed if there are any concerns.
- Request meetings with the attendance team and parents if required.
- Refer to Tameside local authority, to issue penalty warnings & fines. on SIMS.
- Identify Persistent Absentees on SIMS and CPOMS record and monitor all interventions and their outcomes
- Attend Well Being Meetings with the Pastoral Manager and member of SLT.
- Prepare up to date and accurate data for the Well Being Report submitted half termly to the Local Governing Body.
- Alert the Pastoral Manager and/or member of SLT to concerns as they arise.
- Participate in home visits.

## 7. Using Attendance Data

Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the DfE, Tameside Local Authority other agencies.

Every half term The Attendance Administrator will provide the Well Being Team with attendance data for the previous half term for each student within the school.

<b>GOLD</b>	<b>students with outstanding attendance</b>
<b>OUTSTANDING</b>	
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>students with attendance between 99% and 98%</b>
<b>GOOD</b>	
<b>YELLOW</b>	<b>students with attendance less than 98% - 95%</b>
<b>REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT</b>	
<b>RED</b>	<b>students with attendance below 95%</b>
<b>PERSISTENT ABSENCE</b>	<b>students with attendance below 90%</b>

Individual student attendance will be discussed at our six-weekly Quality of Provision Meetings when interventions will be identified, implemented and monitored.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Systems will be in accordance the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 8. Supporting Excellent Attendance

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. Our Pastoral Support Manager, Rachel Cooper will become involved with the family.

We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with medical, physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of interventions to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Letters and phone calls home
- Home visits
- Pastoral manager support

- Referral to other services including School Nurse, Early Help etc
- Meetings with parents and students
- Discussing attendance during Student Consultation Days
- Attendance Panels
- Parenting contracts
- Praise and reward at individual student level, class and whole school level.
- Partnership with other agencies e.g. Tameside LA Educational Welfare, Social Services etc.

Our strategy is set out below:

**GOLD: OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE**

**students with attendance between 100%**

**GREEN : GOOD ATTENDANCE**

**students with attendance between 99% to 98%**

Parents will receive a letter home congratulating them on their child's good/excellent attendance, each half term on the corresponding coloured paper.

**YELLOW: REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT**

**students with attendance between 98% and 95%**

Class teacher will speak to the student to:

- Welcome the student back to school
- Confirm with the student the reason for absence and offer any support that may be required
- Update the student on other work they have missed and support any catch up required

Where unauthorised absence has occurred this will be investigated by the attendance team and a letter to sent to parents advising of concern, outlining the parents' responsibilities and offering support if required.

**RED:**

**students with attendance below 95%**

A member of the Attendance Team will invite parents/carers into school to discuss attendance, seeking solutions and offering support. Outcomes of the meeting will be sent to parents in a letter outlining agreed actions and what will happen if attendance does not improve.

A member of the Attendance Team will speak to the student to:

- Identify underlying home/school issues that may be causing the student's absence
- Review the student's academic progress and make links to the student's attendance eg. If you attended all your classes you could achieve...

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period may commence.

Where these interventions have already been implemented and have had unsatisfactory impact, the parent will be invited to an Attendance Panel where the possible outcomes will be:

Complete a CAF leading to multi agency support

Refer to the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings

Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without providing a satisfactory reason, a minimum of two home visits with the purpose to engage with the parent will be carried out prior to referral to the Local Authority.

The Attendance Leader with a member of the Attendance Team will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. The Attendance Leader will monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENTEES**

### **students with attendance below 90%**

Students who have attendance below 90% are considered to be persistently absent from school.

An identified member of the Attendance Team will:

- Immediately contact parents (telephone, home visit and letter) to an Attendance Review Meeting with the Principal.
- Instigate first day absence contact.
- Liaise with other agencies as appropriate.
- Ensure that weekly contact occurs with the student either individually or within a small group to address themed issues.
- Ensure that weekly contact with the parents to discuss any arising issues and to provide feedback on their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
- Set an individual attendance target for the student of 95% in most instances (consideration should be given to each student's circumstances)
- Review existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the student's attendance and any additional needs
- Be the key contact person for any external agency working with the student
- Input into whole school strategies to address the needs of students within their group
- Identify the student as PA on CPOMs and log all interventions and outcomes.
- Instigate first day home visits by the Principal when the child is absent.

The initial monitor will be one month, if there are no improvements then parents will be invited in again and a Parenting Contract issued alongside the beginning of the absence monitoring period.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Linden Road will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## **8. Legal Sanctions**

### **Prosecution**

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

### **Penalty Notices** (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and leave of absence has not been authorised by the school
- A student has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Tameside Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

### **Whole School Awards**

#### **Weekly**

- Attendance will be discussed in the School Celebration Assembly each week.
- This class will be given a small class reward negotiated with the class teacher eg. extra playtime.
- Children with 100% attendance and punctuality each week will receive a lollipop at the end of the week.

#### **Termly/ Yearly**

- Children with 100% attendance and those with improved attendance will be entered into a raffle with a prize.

### **Related Policies**

- Behaviour for Learning
- Safeguarding/ Child Protection
- Tameside: Children Missing Education Protocol
- Tameside: Penalty Notice Protocol



LINDEN ROAD ACADEMY  
PRINCIPAL: MS. A. IVES  
**TEL: 0161 320 0002**  
**FAX: 0161 3205603**

### **APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

Attached is an application form for leave of absence in school time. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully.

- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. Tameside Local Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children absent. The Principal has the right to refuse your request to take your child out of school. Linden Road Academy operates a zero tolerance on holidays taken in term time.
- If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you must apply for permission in writing using the attached form. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised.
- If your application is refused and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued against you. (£60 per child, per parent even if separated)

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed leave of absence as possible.

More details can be found in our Attendance Policy can be found on the school website  
<http://www.lindenroadacademy.co.uk/about-us/key-information/attendance>

Please contact Mrs Boyle, School Attendance Officer if you wish to discuss this application further.

LINDEN ROAD ACADEMY  
PRINCIPAL: MS. A. IVES  
TEL: 0161 320 0002  
FAX: 0161 3205603



**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

Pupil's Name ..... Class .....

Home Address .....

.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

First day of absence ..... Date of Return to School .....

Number of school days absent .....

Reasons for absence from school:

.....  
.....  
.....

*I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice for irregular school attendance.*

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Date .....

**For School Use**

Current attendance % (in current academic year) and previous year for PA	
Previous leave of absence this academic year and any unauthorised absence.	
Does the leave of absence time co-incide with SATS / other examination periods?	
Any mitigating / aggravating circumstances which indicate this leave of absence should be authorised / not authorised?	
Given information above, and reason for request, is the holiday approved?	YES/NO
Signature of Head Teacher:	
Date:	