

Lanchester E.P. (Cont.) Primary School

A Caring Community
where all can flourish



Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Lanchester E.P. (Cont.) Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Give parents termly updates for individual attendance
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements;
- Share the definition of good attendance regularly with children;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions;
- Reward individual children for 100% attendance.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- minor ailments
- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the Counsellor.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to monitoring and will be invited to attend meetings as appropriate. Allocation of additional support through the School Nurse may be offered. If this absence persists then a referral to First Contact may be made.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow these procedures:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, before 9.30am.
- This should be done by telephone or by calling into school and reporting to reception
- A text or message via another parent or sibling **is not** acceptable.

If a child is absent we will:

- Text/telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.30am;
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the Head Teacher if absences persist;
- If no progress is shown following meetings with HT or PSA then a referral will be made to First Contact for additional support

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Being 10 mins late every day for one year is equal to 33 hours - approximately 6 days!

Minutes lost each day	Days lost per year
5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6.5 days
15 minutes	10 days
20 minutes	13 days
30 minutes	19 days

How Lateness is Managed:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we have a flexible drop off for all children between 8.40 and 8.55 am. Registers are marked by **8.55am** and at **9.15am** the registers will be closed.

In accordance with the regulations, if children arrive after the time the registers close they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents/carers could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Head to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Holidays in Term Time

Since September 2013 there is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. All applications for any leave of absence must be made in advance and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, will be classed as unauthorised and will result in a Penalty Notice (fines of £60/£120).

Targets

Good attendance is the key to successful schooling and our school target attendance percentage is 96%. Targets for the school and for classes will be displayed in the school to encourage participation by all in reaching these. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made and we will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

Percentage Attendance	Days missed over a school year
100%	0 days missed
95%	10 days missed
90%	20 days missed
85%	30 days missed
80%	40 days missed

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix to Attendance Policy

Attendance Promotion:

Newsletters – regular reminders about importance of good attendance (January 2015)

Weekly class attendance award for best attending class – this makes children aware of their class attendance and that of others.

Attendance Badges and Trophies – children who get 100% attendance in one term receive an attendance badge and this is presented in the whole school assembly. They are also entered into a prize draw for an Amazon Gift Card. Children who get 100% attendance for the whole year receive a certificate to celebrate this achievement.

Action taken regarding lack of attendance:

First day call – Parents are instructed to call school on the first and following days of absence. If no call is received then a call is made to parents to learn about their child's absence.

Monitoring of attendance – governors recognise the importance of attendance and have paid for additional time to monitor this. The Attendance Officer spends 1 session a week monitoring attendance of all children. If a child has less than 93% and there is no clear reason for this OR if there is a pattern of absence e.g. every Friday, the Attendance Officer will contact parents and discuss this. The Attendance Officer will then monitor this for the following month and look to see if there is an improvement. If there is improvement then they will ring parents back the month later to celebrate improvement or will inform the HT to contact and arrange a meeting if no improvement.

Attendance of different groups is monitored to see if there is a pattern of poor attendance and for appropriate action to be taken.

Holiday Requests – The school has a Leave of Absence form that all parents have to fill in when requesting LOA. Requests will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. The vast majority are not authorised.