

Locking Primary School

Attendance Policy

Locking Primary School Attendance Policy

Date Ratified:

Signed By:
On behalf of School Governors

Signed by :
Headteacher

Review Date: May 2017

Philosophy

Locking Primary School is committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our pupils. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 % attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to emphasising to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home – school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, pupils and other partner agencies to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Principles

Ensure all staff are aware of the registration procedures.

Encourage parents/carers to contact the school office early on each day of absence.

Reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.

Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.

Consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

Regularly evaluate attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors.

Inform parents and pupils of attendance rates and related issues.

Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent she/he will be missed.

Have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

Performance

Targets for improved attendance will be set annually. It is important to set realistic targets and these targets will be integral to the School Development Plan. Each year the governors will check whether these targets were met and, if not, try to establish why not.

Part of the evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful, this will include considering: -

- Attendance data for individual pupils, tutor groups and the school as a whole.
- Has the school ethos improved?
- Has the behaviour of pupils improved?
- How successful have pupil re-inclusion plans been?
- Is the school a better place to be for staff and pupils?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the community?
- How well informed are new pupils about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) lessons or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

We will strive to raise the profile of attendance through individual certificates and prizes, celebrated as a whole school.

Locking Primary School believes that it is essential to keep this policy “alive”, and consultation and communication are key factors that will ensure that the Policy has impact in raising attendance.

First day response

First day response is an integral part of the Attendance Policy. Parents and pupils must realise that a pupil's absence will be noted and acted upon swiftly. First day response sends a clear message to pupils and parents that attendance is very important. This will usually take place within 60 minutes of the registration deadline.

For the schools policy of first day response to work efficiently:

- There will be clear procedures in place with designated key attendance staff with clear roles and responsibilities.
- There will be a named member of staff with the responsibility and with specific, designated time for undertaking first day response daily.
- Parents to contact the school by 9.30am on the each morning that the child is away. Reasons for the child's absence should be given.
- If the parent has not contacted the school by 9.30am, then the parents of identified pupils should expect to be contacted.
- Parents will be challenged if they fail to inform the school of the reasons for absence, or if the reasons given for absence are unacceptable.

This procedure will be most effective if it:

- a) is applied to every absence, sending a clear message that absences are not allowed for reasons other than those determined by the law
- b) it is understood by all and followed by all members of the school community.
- c) Is accessible on the school website and available as a hard copy in the school reception.

It is the view of the school that first day contact works by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of full attendance
- Addressing problems before they become serious
- Improving home-school liaison
- Sending a clear message to parents and pupils that if a child is absent they will be missed
- Alerting parents who may be unaware that their child is truanting and therefore may be at risk

- Requiring and promoting a high level of communication within the school: staff working as a team
- Reducing the number of pupils who have short-term absence, thereby reducing the overall absence rate
- Assisting parents and pupils to develop habits that reduce casual absence and encouraging early contact from parents

Types of Absences

Authorised Absence: an explanation for the absence is provided by the parent/carer and agreed by the Head teacher

Unauthorised Absence: an absence not agreed or unexplained

Medical: will usually be authorised although evidence such as a doctors' note will be requested if there are any concerns around medical absences. Absences will be unauthorised without this evidence.

Returning to school after pro-longed absence

For any pupil returning to school after a prolonged absence, the school will make provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system if necessary. In the event returning after a long-term absence, a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) may be implemented. The PSP will include all relevant members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible. Implementation of the PSP will follow North Somerset guidance provided by the Education Welfare Service.

Lateness

The school bell rings at 8:55am when school starts. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Children arriving after 9:00 am but before 9.30am will be recorded as late. Children arriving after 9.30am will be recorded late after registration closes which is an unauthorised absence.

There are three negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late:

- The loss of learning suffered by the pupil themselves which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school.
- The disruption to other children in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.
- This can raise levels of unauthorised absence

Exceptional Absence

Parent/ carers may request an exceptional leave of absence by completing a yellow form and returning it to the Head Teacher no later than 7 days before dates requested. These forms may be requested from the school office. No verbal requests will be considered.

The Head Teacher will reply to the parent/ carer request in writing. This reply will outline possible consequences of future non-school attendance.

There are very strict guidelines for the Head Teacher to consider when authorising an absence during term time. The Head Teacher may wish to meet with the parent/ carer to discuss the impact of the absence. The Head Teacher may choose to authorise or unauthorise the request.

If the Head Teacher does NOT authorise the request and the pupil is absent for the requested period the EWO may issue a Penalty Notice.

Strategies

The strategies Locking school may use to promote positive attendance include:

Certificates and Prizes

At the end of the Term 6 every child that has 100% attendance for the whole of the academic year will be presented with a certificate and prize.

Parent Contracts

If a child's attendance falls below 90% in any one term the school may seek to raise attendance by drawing up a contract with parents / carers. This will enable the school to support the family in improving the child's punctuality and/or attendance.

Home-School Communication

Locking school may write to the parent/carer to celebrate good or improved attendance or to highlight a concern with absence.

The school has an answer machine or text service for a parent/ carer to report an absence before school opening hours.

Attendance Clinics and Meetings

Parent/ carers may be invited into the school to discuss their child's absence and identify the support needed to improve attendance.

Penalty Warning Notices

This is a letter informing the parent/carer that they are at risk of incurring a Penalty Notice (fine) if they do not ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Penalty Notice

Accumulated unauthorised absences may result in a Penalty Notice (fine) being issued by North Somerset Council.

- Penalty Notices are £60 (per parent, per pupil) if paid within 21 days
or
- £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.
- If the fine is not paid (and the notice is not withdrawn) the parent will be prosecuted for the offence of 'failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school'.

School telephone number: 01934 822867
School text number: 07436582114
PSA contact number: 07825228676 Mrs Sarah Timms