



## Long Mountain CE Primary School and Pre School

**'...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'** Matthew 5: 15-16

### **Attendance Policy (including Child Missing in Education procedure)**

At Long Mountain CE Primary School and Pre School, each policy reflects our Christian ethos and vision. We are an inclusive Church of England school community where each child knows they are loved and valued for who they are and can grow to their full potential.

This policy was written/reviewed in:	December 2021
This policy was adopted by governors on:	December 2021
This policy is due for review in:	
Signed by the headteacher:	
Signed by the Chair of Governors:	

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

Long Mountain CE Primary School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”*** (DfE 1999).

### **Aims & Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

## **Responsibility of Parents/Carers**

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

### **Punctuality**

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time. Both KS1 and KS2 doors open at 8:40am until 8:50am. This is sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom.

*Please note: in times of restrictions on social contact (due to Covid-19), there may be an altered or staggered start and end time to the school day. Parents will be informed of school procedures via the school website, remote platform (Seesaw) and text message.*

- To ensure children who are late (after 8:50am) report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day (3.15pm) and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

### **Absences**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:10am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office (01743 891320), or emailing [admin@longmountain.shropshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@longmountain.shropshire.sch.uk).
- To provide medical evidence, if necessary, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:10am.

## **Illness/Medical absences**

In addition to the points previously, if a child has prolonged absence due to illness or is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription, etc.

## **Absence for Holidays**

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

The Absence in Term Time Policy (appendix A) is provided to parents upon their child's initial registration to the school sign and agree to. This document sets out that holidays in term time may not be granted by the Headteacher, unless there is considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Parents/carers must complete a Request for Leave Form (appendix B) in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office (or see appendix B).
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Headteacher's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.**

## **Absence for Other Reasons**

Absences for reasons that qualify as 'exceptional circumstances' in the Absence in Term Time Policy (appendix A) such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Headteachers. These requests must be discussed with the school and a Request for Leave Form completed, if necessary. Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing or via the Request of Leave Form (appendix B), of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

### **Unexplained Absence**

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

### **Persistent Latecomers**

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:50am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children..

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after registration closes may be marked as unauthorised. Warning letters and/or fixed-penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children have unauthorised absences due to persistent or prolonged lateness.

### **Children Missing in Education**

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. The school will take all reasonable endeavours to make contact with the family to ascertain the child's whereabouts. The headteacher (DSL) will consider the potential safeguarding risks posed by unexplained absence and may make a safeguarding referral at any point if the child is deemed to be at risk. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a 'substantial period of time', the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority. Link for form below:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance-or-exclusion/children-missing-education-cme/>

## **Role of the School**

The school will work closely with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other agencies to ensure the safety, well-being and excellent attendance of all pupils.

Good school attendance will be promoted and celebrated throughout school.

We may reward excellent attendance through certificates (given during praise assembly), special treats (e.g. hot chocolate Friday) or prizes. We will work with other local schools to promote a culture of excellent attendance. For example, by running friendly inter-school attendance competitions.

Parents/carers will be offered support to overcome barriers to good attendance. School staff will proactively seek to find solutions to issues that may be inhibiting school attendance. Example of these steps include:

- Accessing advice and support from the EWO
- Working with families to make referrals to Early Help
- Implementing nurture plans to support children who make experience separation anxiety or who have anxiety about attending which may present as school avoidance

The governing body will be updated on school attendance data and will challenge the headteacher to ensure that a culture of high expectations and excellent attendance is established and maintained.

## **Role of the Education Welfare Officer**

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days of missed schooling.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

## Appendix A

### ABSENCE IN TERM TIME POLICY

On 1 September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force, changing the rules about term-time holidays.

The amendments removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days.

Parents were informed that during 2013/14, the school would adopt a pragmatic approach which defined pre-booked family holidays as 'exceptional' given that the introduction of regulations meant for a number of parents, events would not be repeated.

The amendments specify that the headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances" for doing so. If leave is granted, the headteacher should determine the number of days a child can be away from school. The Governing Body agreed that it is important to all families that where leave of absence is granted, this should be done against clear criteria.

#### Definitions of 'Exceptional Circumstances'

'Exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

- Being unforeseen and unavoidable.
- Being a 'one off' event not be repeated.
- Being a significant life-event for the child.
- Being for compassionate reasons.

Given this interpretation, examples where absence would be granted may include, but are not limited to:

- Being unable to return to school due to breakdown.
- Attending the funeral of a close family member.
- Attending the wedding of a close family member.
- Competing in major sporting event.
- Time off to visit a terminally ill close family member.

Family holidays of any form do not fit under this definition. Nor would permission be granted for the convenience (business, financial or otherwise) of parents.

While decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

### **WARNING**

If this requested period of absence has not been authorised, details will be passed to Shropshire Council's Education Access Service. The Council may, in the following circumstances, issue a formal Warning, serve a Fixed Penalty Notice or take court action in respect of non-school attendance for this and any future unauthorised absence:

- Parents have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time
- The headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or
- A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation

**Appendix B**

Long Mountain CE Primary School



**Request for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time in Exceptional Circumstances**

Headteachers can only authorise any absence when an application has been made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child is normally resident and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance. An annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance.

Full name of child(repl) \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for application and dates \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's forename \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's forename \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The headteacher may take into account:

- It is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life.
- It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event.
- The event **cannot** be organised outside of the school term.
- Taking part in the event will be of greater value to the child than attending school.

Once use only

Authorised  Unauthorised

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (headteacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Parents have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time
- The headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or
- A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation