

Lathom High School Attendance Policy

RATIONALE

The school recognises the clear link between attendance and the attainment levels of students and thus seeks to ensure that all students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for realising potential.

At Lathom it is recognised that the responsibility for promoting school attendance and punctuality is shared by the staff, parents and carers and the student. Within school there is a professional responsibility for all staff to support attendance and punctuality and that it is not the responsibility of particular individuals or groups of staff. As a school we continue to strive for 100% and this is the message we share with students, parents and carers and staff.

AIMS:

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at Lathom High School
- To provide a welcoming and caring environment in which every student feels safe, secure and valued
- To ensure a curriculum appropriate to all students

OBJECTIVES:

1. To ensure that attendance and punctuality are a priority for staff, students, parents and governors
2. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
3. To provide support, advice and guidance for students and parents
4. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data using SIMS
5. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
6. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions
7. To promote effective partnerships with Children's Integrated Services and other relevant agencies
8. To recognise the needs of individual students when planning reintegration
9. To monitor and analyse individual, whole school attendance and the attendance of identified groups such as Persistent Absentees, Free School Meals, Special Educational Needs, Pupil Premium, Ethnicity, EAL, CLA, Young Carers
10. To initiate a CAF where appropriate

PROCEDURES:

1. Form Tutors make an accurate record of attendance during morning and afternoon registration
2. Form Tutors file any absence notes
3. Form Tutors inform students of the sanctions for lateness to school without a valid reason
4. The School Attendance Officers assess appropriate action to take regarding absences (i.e. contact with parent or carer via phone calls, home visits)

5. The School Attendance Officers inform the Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year of known absences and the action they are taking
6. Subject teachers make an accurate record of attendance during the first ten minutes of every lesson
7. The School Attendance Officers provide each Phase Leader with statistical information regarding attendance and support them in identifying patterns
8. Each Assistant Head of Year provides Form Tutors with accurate information regarding the attendance of students in their tutor groups
9. Form Tutors and the Assistant Head of Year display information regarding attendance
10. The Phase Leaders, their Assistants, and Form Tutors reward good and improved attendance
11. Form Tutors, each Phase Leader, Assistant Head of Year and the School Attendance Officers provide parents with accurate information regarding attendance
12. In the event of continued absence from school parents will be advised that absences will be unauthorised unless professional medical evidence is provided

The school may request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence or parenting contracts in accordance with the local Code of Conduct. Depending on the circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996

CONCLUSION

The discharge of the above policy is a priority to ensure students fulfil their potential

Guidelines for Implementation of the Whole School Attendance Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

1. Support and overview of school attendance – nominated Governor – Mrs Dianne Murray

Headteacher

1. Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality in the school and the wider community

Deputy Headteacher:

1. Analyse GCSE results according to attendance bands
2. Ensure that attendance issues are communicated to parents and students alongside academic reporting

Deputy Headteacher:

1. Take overall responsibility for developing the Attendance Policy within school ensuring that staff are kept informed
2. Provide line management for the School Attendance Officers
3. Liaise with the Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year regarding attendance and punctuality
4. Ensure that appropriate sanctions are applied for students arriving late to school
5. Analyse attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance and take appropriate action to address the problems
6. Oversee the efficient running of the SIMS system and take action where registers are not being completed or not being completed accurately
7. Take a lead in promoting the need for good attendance through assemblies and work with staff and students
8. Decide on new admissions and ensure that any possible attendance problems are addressed immediately
9. Work with the Inclusion Lead, Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year and the School Attendance Officers to identify Year 6 students with attendance problems and provide appropriate levels of support

The School Attendance Officer and Attendance Outreach Workers

1. Work with the Head of each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year to identify students needing support and close monitoring
2. Work with parents/carers of targeted students to provide support in the return to school.
3. Code absences appropriately to ensure consistency across the school
4. Contact parents/carers where absences remain unexplained
5. Work with targeted students to improve attendance through parental contact, attendance reports, short term targets and rewards
6. Work with each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year to implement the attendance rewards system

7. Liaise with each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year to keep parents informed about the attendance levels of students
8. Provide each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year with appropriate attendance information for display on the year noticeboard
9. Display attendance information in a central location and update this on a regular basis
10. Work with each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year to organise attendance competitions
11. Work with each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year to involve outside agencies as appropriate
12. Liaise with the LA representative to report any information regarding possible illegal employment of students
13. Ensure that the school's official registers are in line with legal requirements and report any anomalies to SLT
14. Check late sheet daily and amend accordingly – file for retention
15. Provide weekly attendance information for each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year and as required at other times
16. Keep the student roll up to date adding or removing students as required
17. Send out appropriate information regarding attendance to parents/carers
18. Ensure transfer of Common Transfer Form has been sent to the new school. For students being removed from roll and their destination unknown, make the appropriate enquiries and follow the correct DfE procedures
19. Provide students being sent home ill during the school day with a card to present to the front desk for permission to sign out

ICT Systems Team

1. Ensure the smooth running of the SIMS system
2. Provide assistance with running reports
3. Provide staff with up-to-date information about the SIMS system

The Form Tutor

1. Ensure that registers for morning and afternoon lesson sessions are accurately completed and maintained
2. Make clear to the tutor group that lateness to registration is not acceptable and apply appropriate sanctions. Inform their Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year of continued lateness.
3. Check the SIMS data for each day to identify any internal truancy from lessons. Speak to the student and take appropriate action. Inform the Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year.
4. Take action to collect absence notes from returning students. Where absence notes are not provided within one week of the absence inform the School Attendance Officer.
5. Collect and scrutinise absence notes and alert the School Attendance Officer if professional judgement suggests they may be forged.
6. Discuss instances of inappropriate absence with the student and alert each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year so that contact can be made with parents.
7. Ensure that all absence notes are passed to the School Attendance Office after initialling and dating.

8. Encourage good attendance through constant reinforcement of individual and class targets.
9. Liaise with each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year as soon as possible where there are issues of attendance with individual students or the tutor group.
10. Ensure that the tutor group understands that getting their mark for the register is a priority both in registration and in lessons
11. Follow the procedures for taking the register which are:
 - ✓ Call out each name before giving the appropriate mark
 - ✓ Do a head count and check it tallies with SIMS
 - ✓ Adjust as necessary if/ when a student arrives late

Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year

1. Monitor carefully the attendance of students in their Year/Phase and inform SLT and the School Attendance Officer of any identified patterns.
2. Liaise with the School Attendance Officers to ensure that students with poor attendance records are given appropriate levels of support.
3. Monitor the attendance rates of tutor groups within the year group and take appropriate action with tutors to address problem areas.
4. Foster a positive attitude to attendance within the year group through year assemblies, the year notice board and constant positive reinforcement.
5. Encourage a spirit of friendly competition between tutor groups and individuals.
6. Liaise with subject teachers to ensure that appropriate work is set for long term absentees, students excluded from school and students accessing seclusion provision at other schools.
7. Work with the School Attendance Officers to identify ways to successfully reintegrate long-term absentees.
8. Liaise with parents/carers on matters relating to their child's attendance.
9. Implement sanctions where there have been instances of truancy.
10. Inform tutors of any action taken relating to attendance issues.
11. Ensure parents are aware that holidays during term time will not be authorised.
12. Implement sanctions for students arriving too late for morning registration.
13. Refer students requesting to be sent home due to feeling unwell during the school day to the School Attendance Team

Subject Teachers

1. Ensure that the SIMS registration of all students in the teaching group is completed accurately within the first ten minutes of each lesson.
2. Inform the ICT Systems Team as soon as possible if there are problems with the system. If for some reason the register cannot be taken electronically, ensure that a paper register is taken.
3. Identify any student who should be in the lesson and are not. Inform the School Attendance Officers and the Head of the appropriate Year/Phase.
4. When a student is known to have truanted from your lesson, follow this up by making sure they have caught up the missed work in detention time.
5. Ensure that all students are able to access learning through a range of learning and teaching strategies.
6. Ensure that underachieving students are identified and the Curriculum Leader and the appropriate Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year informed.

7. Monitor the attendance of individuals within the lesson and inform the Curriculum Leader and the Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year where patterns of non-attendance are detected.
8. Ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for long-term absentees and those on long term exclusions so that return to school can be facilitated.
9. Ensure that those returning from a long absence are given appropriate support to enable them to access learning within the lesson.
10. Welcome back students returning from a long absence in a professional manner, avoiding reference to the absence in front of other students
11. Actively discourage any adverse comments about the absence from other students in the class.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Under section 36 of the 1944 Education Act, parents or carers of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their child receives full time education, whether by regular attendance at school or otherwise and this is supported by the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act (Part III) amendment to 'parenting orders', which were introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 specifying steps parents must take to control their children.

Parents or carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996

A Fixed Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court unless the fine is **unpaid after 28 days. Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority with a fine of £120 per child/per parent/guardian to be paid within 28 days of being issued, or £60 if paid within 21 days.** (Full details of Fixed Penalty Notices are available, on request, in school and on the school website)

It is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that all pupils between the ages of 5 and 16 receive an education.

This Policy and Procedures document is informed by DfES circular 11/91 "The Education (School Attendance Records) Regulations 1991" and "School Attendance – Policy and Practise – Categorisation of Absence" DfES 1994 – Paragraph 21, reminds us that:

"Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call, Student Planner) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it".

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Alongside changes to Government key legislation (September 2013), holidays will not be authorised during term time, to ensure students have access to their full education without learning gaps. In this time of extreme competition for employment and higher educational placements, we are ensuring that our students have every advantage.

Depending on the circumstances of a holiday taken without authorisation, Lancashire County Council may be requested to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. **Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority**

with a fine of £120 per child/per parent/guardian to be paid within 28 days of being issued, or £60 if paid within 21 days. (Full details of Fixed Penalty Notices are available, on request, in school and on the school website)

LATE ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Registration period Monday – Friday begins at 8.45am and 1.40pm. Students arriving after 8.45am are marked late and will receive an immediate same day detention after school. Any student arriving after 1.40pm will be deemed to be late and the register marked L. Any student having persistent lates during a week will be referred to senior staff. Only those students arriving after 8.55am should enter via the front door and then report to the attendance office to sign the late arrivals sheet. Students arriving persistently Late to school will be monitored by each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year and contact made with home when necessary. Registers will close at 9.30am in line with Ofsted recommendations and DfE guidelines. Any student arriving after 9.30am without good reason, will be marked U (unauthorised absence).

DEFINITIONS

ABSENCE

When a student does not arrive at school for a session (half day)

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

These are attributed to:

- Illness
- Treatment or appointments at hospital, dentist, optician etc.
- Exclusions
- Attendance at court
- Compassionate grounds
- Other approved circumstances
- Religious observance
- Study Leave
- Traveller absence

These criteria are subject to change according to DfE Guidance

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Those absences other than authorised ones for which no explanation has been given or an explanation has been given that is not accepted by the school such as:

- shopping
- attending a football match
- family holiday
- U – signing in after close of registers (9.30am)

PERSISTENT ABSENTEE

- a Persistent Absentee is defined (by the Department for Education) as any child whose cumulative attendance is 90% or below at any point during the academic year.

APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

These include:

- Educated off site
- Educational visits
- Interviews
- Work Experience
- Approved sporting activities

ABSCONDING

In the event of a student leaving the school site without permission, staff must inform the School Attendance Officers and the staff on call at the time. A search will be instigated and the parent or carer will be contacted.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Lathom High School is committed to promoting the welfare of your child through regular school attendance. Every day lost to education can have a serious impact on your child's attainment at school. We are therefore fully committed to promoting school attendance by providing an environment where children feel safe and can build positive relationships with their peers.

We expect that in return parents and carers ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually and that absences in term time should be avoided.

“Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call, Student Planner) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it”.

Lathom High school's attendance target for 2018 – 2019 is 97%. This is, therefore, the minimum expectation for all students on roll.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Parents and carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

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FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Alongside changes to Government key legislation (September 2013), holidays will not be authorised during term time, to ensure students have access to their full education without learning gaps. In this time of extreme competition for employment and higher educational placements, we are ensuring that our students have every advantage. Depending on the circumstances of a holiday taken without authorisation, Lancashire County Council may be requested to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. **Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority with a fine of £120 per child/per parent/guardian to be paid within 28 days of being issued, or £60 if paid within 21 days.** (Full details of Fixed Penalty Notices are available, on request, in school and on the school website)

Depending on the circumstances of a holiday taken without authorisation, it is possible that Lancashire County Council may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Failure to pay may lead to further legal action.

In exceptional circumstances parents may submit a request in writing to the Headteacher for consideration by the Governors.

LATE ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Registration period begins at 8.45am and 1.40pm and Fridays at 8.45am and 1.40pm each day. Students arriving after 8.45am are marked late and will receive an immediate after school detention on the same day. Any student arriving after 1.40pm will be deemed to be late and the register marked L. Any student having persistent lates during a week will be referred to senior staff.

Only those students arriving after 8.55am should enter via the front door and then report to the attendance office to sign the late arrivals sheet. Students arriving persistently Late to school will be monitored by each Phase Leader and Assistant Head of Year and contact made with home when necessary. Registers will close at 9.30am in line with Ofsted recommendations and DfE guidelines. Any student arriving after 9.30am without good reason, will be marked U (unauthorised absence).

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

In the event that your child is absent from school for any reason please telephone school on **01695 725653** or the school Attendance Office on **01695 711601** before 9.00am. You will need to give the student's full name and details of the reason for absence and likely date of return. All absences must be covered by a letter to the Form Tutor on your child returning to school.