



Learn-AT

Learning ~ Fellowship

School Attendance Policy

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Please note that this policy supersedes and replaces any equivalent policies or sections of policies. This policy is non contractual and can therefore be amended without consultation. Before you use this policy, please check you have the latest version using the footer reference and Learn-AT Policy Index.

This policy applies to all Learn Academies Trust schools and should be read in conjunction with the latest associated guidance issued by Learn-AT.

1. PRINCIPLES

- 1.1. Learn Academies Trust schools expect good attendance from their pupils in order that they take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them, and aim to support pupils in developing positive attitudes towards punctuality and attendance. Pupils should be made aware, by both parents and staff, that their presence is important.
- 1.2. Parents of pupils of compulsory school age are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school; they risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for absence.
- 1.3. Parents should be aware that absence from school may have a detrimental effect on their child's education. Learning is a complex process in which knowledge, skills and understanding are developed and built on systematically. Interruptions to this process can lead to gaps in a child's knowledge and understanding, missed stages in the acquisition of new skills and lost opportunities to share in and grow from new experiences. If parents insist on taking their child out of school during term time then they must accept that they bear responsibility for the consequent effects upon their child's education. The school cannot influence a child's education if the child does not attend school.

2. ABSENCE

- 2.1. There are two types of absence:
 - 2.1.1. **Authorised** (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - Absence will be authorised for occurrences such as:
 - pupil sickness
 - serious or critical illness of a close relative
 - unavoidable medical/dental appointments
 - exceptional short term domestic circumstances
 - religious observance
 - bereavement
 - wedding of immediate family member

- attendance at or in connection with a Children's Hearing or Care Review
- approved activities for sports and the arts
- travelling (where ascribed to the Traveller Community).

2.1.2. **Unauthorised** (where the school will not approve absence)

Absence will not be authorised for events such as:

- shopping trips
- birthday or other day trips
- non-medical appointments
- closure of a sibling's school for training days
- family holidays.

3. PROCEDURES

- 3.1. If a child is absent from school, parents should call the school on the first day of absence by 9.30a.m. stating a reason. In the event of illness, there is no necessity to ring the school every day following the initial call. However, if a child's illness lasts for more than 3 days, then the parent should ring the school again to inform them of their progress.
- 3.2. Learn Academies Trust schools take their safeguarding duties very seriously. If the school has not been informed by 9:30a.m. on the morning of a child's first day of absence, they will ring you to ask the whereabouts of your child. This system is known as 'First Response' and is in place in many schools across the country. By doing this we are secure in the knowledge that all pupils are safe and are where they should be. This will also enable the school to enter the correct attendance code in the register. (see Appendix A)
- 3.3. The school will decide whether to authorise an absence. If no explanation is given for an absence and office staff are unable to contact a child's parents/carers, they will be contacted by letter for an explanation. (see Appendix B)

4. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- 4.1. An absence will automatically be recorded as unauthorised if there is no telephone/written explanation received from parents.
- 4.2. Holidays or other non-essential absence taken without the school's prior approval will also be recorded as unauthorised absence.

5. REGISTRATION

- 5.1. Registers are a legal document and provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils. The class teacher is responsible for marking the register at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.
- 5.2. Registers are taken at 9.00am in the morning and 1.10pm in the afternoon.
- 5.3. Children who arrive in school after 9.00am must go directly to the school office where their time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded. They are then marked as late (L) in the register. Arrivals after 9.30am. will be considered as absences and require authorisation.
- 5.4. It is a statutory requirement that numbers of authorised and unauthorised absences are reported to the Department for Education. Absences are recorded electronically, with daily and weekly attendances figures completed.

6. FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

- 6.1. Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. A pupil's absence in term time can seriously disrupt the continuity of their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days that they are away, but they are also less well prepared for the lessons building on this when they return.
- 6.2. From 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education Regulations in relation to absence from school give NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave (for example, in the case where a family holiday is judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events or the holiday might be a unique, one-off never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested).
- 6.3. Parents must notify the headteacher in writing if they wish to apply exceptional for leave of absence from school for any reason using the appropriate form (see Appendix C). Each request will be considered individually, case by case, taking into account the circumstances and the child's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.
- 6.4. The following will not be deemed as exceptional circumstances:
 - the availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation
 - holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term
 - holidays booked by a third party.
- 6.5. Parents are strongly discouraged from applying for leave of absence which coincides with the start of the school year, as the first few weeks of the school year

are very important for learning routines, establishing relationships and expectations, and building friendships.

- 6.6. The school reserves the right to withdraw authorisation should a child's attendance deteriorate between the leave of absence application and the time when the absence is due to occur.
- 6.7. The school recognises that parents' circumstances (financial position, working commitments etc) vary enormously but the headteacher is nonetheless required to ensure that pupils only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable.

7. PUNCTUALITY

- 7.1. It is important to foster positive attitudes to arriving at school on time. Pupils who arrive late miss vital information given at the beginning of lessons and can also feel self-conscious about arriving in the classroom after an activity has started.
- 7.2. We expect all children to be in school by 9.00a.m. ready for morning registration. Parents of pupils who are persistently late over a period of 4 weeks will be contacted by the school.

8. STATUTORY TESTING

- 8.1. Parents of pupils in Year 6 are made aware of the fact that statutory testing takes place annually in May and cannot be taken at any other time.
- 8.2. The Headteacher is unable to grant Leave of Absence permission for Year 6 pupils during the week of the statutory tests.

9. LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE / ATTENDANCE GIVING CAUSE FOR CONCERN

- 9.1. Whilst encouraging 100% attendance if possible, we recognise that there are circumstances in which attendance may not be possible. It is our expectation that all pupils will achieve attendance of 96% and above. Attendance is monitored closely. Parents will be contacted if their child's attendance falls to 90% as the child may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.
- 9.2. Parents of pupils with attendance below 85%, which is considered to be persistent absenteeism, and with a high level of unauthorised absence, are at risk of fixed penalty notices. It is highly unlikely that the headteacher will authorise exceptional leave of absence in cases such as these.
- 9.3. Where there is no significant improvement in attendance the parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the situation. The Headteacher may refer the family to our Parent Support Adviser.

10. FREQUENT MEDICAL ABSENCES

- 10.1. In the case of a child with a large number of absences for medical reasons (e.g. over 20 sessions) the school will require medical evidence in order to authorise future absences of this nature.

11. MONITORING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

- 11.1. Learn Academies Trust is committed to promoting a strong attendance ethos.

- 11.2. The following positive measures are in place to encourage 100% attendance:

- promoting good attendance and punctuality in assemblies
- annual reports to parents to indicate level of attendance:

85.0% or less	Attendance a grave concern (persistent absentee)
85.1 – 94.9%	Attendance being monitored (contact with parents at 90% threshold)
96% or above	Attendance good

- 11.3. Schools will aim to resolve any problems regarding a pupil's attendance as early as possible, in consultation with parents/carers.

- 11.4. It is the responsibility of the headteacher to monitor attendance. If a child is regularly absent/late, the headteacher will contact parents to notify them of the school's concern and to emphasise the parents' legal responsibility to ensure regular attendance. If persistent absence continues and the school's efforts to improve attendance are unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Pupil Services Court Team.

Appendix A: School Register - Attendance Codes

Present at school:

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration

L Late arrival before the register has closed

Authorised:

B Off-site educational activity

C Leave of absence authorised by the school

D Dual registered – at another educational establishment

E Excluded

H Holiday authorised by the school

I Illness (not medical/dental appointments)

J At an interview with prospective employers/or at another educational establishment

M Medical or dental appointment

P Participating in a supervised sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

Unauthorised:

G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Absent from school without authorisation

U Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes:

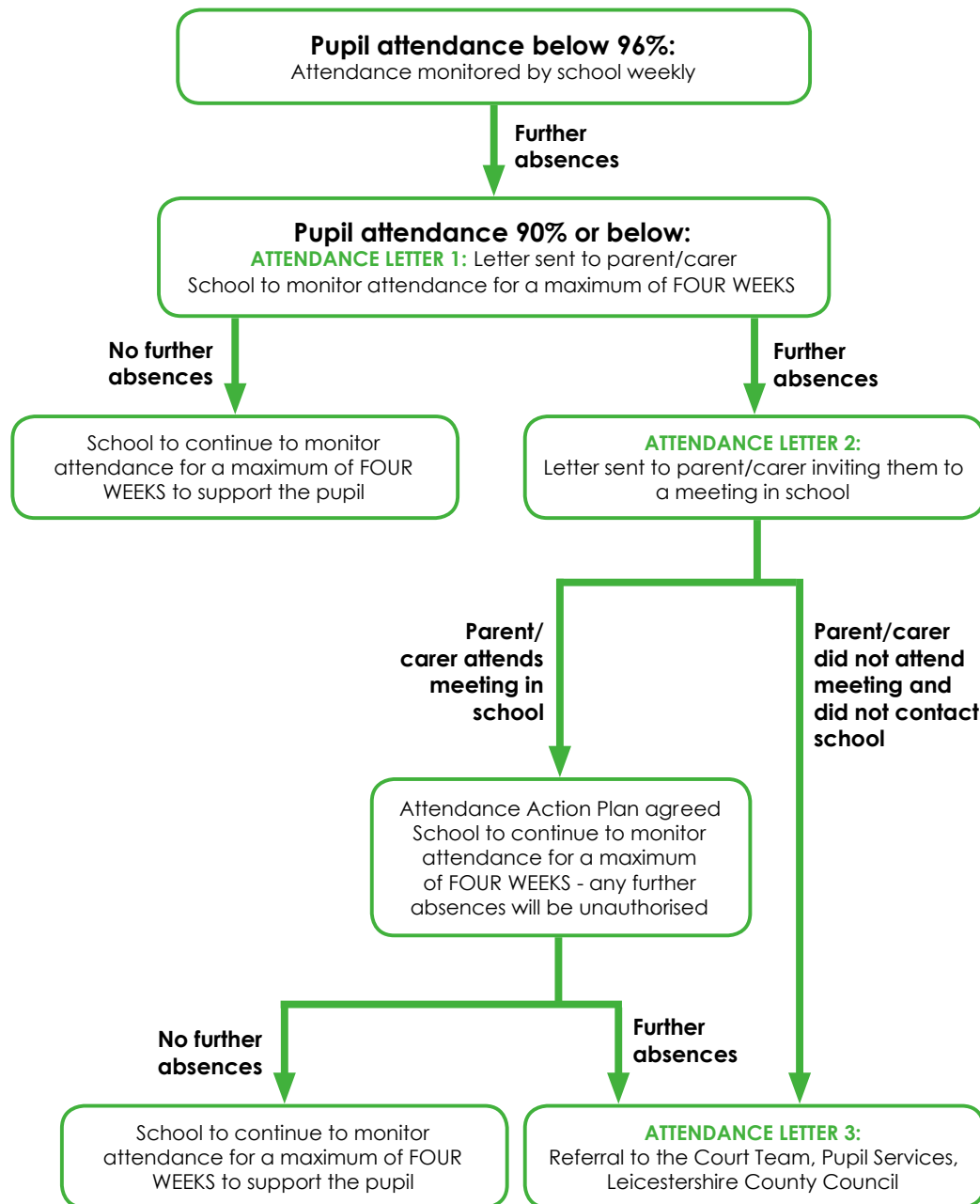
X Not required to be in school

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Z Pupil not on the admission register

Planned whole or partial school closure

Appendix B – Attendance Flowchart



Model Letter 1 (Please copy onto your school letterhead)

[Parent Name]
[Address]
[Postcode]

[Date]

Dear

[PUPIL NAME] [DOB] [CLASS]

I am writing to express my concern over [PUPILS NAME] attendance, which is currently at [XX]%. This means that [PUPIL NAME] has missed [NO. OF SESSIONS] sessions since the beginning of the academic year.

At [SCHOOL NAME] School we believe that regular attendance and punctuality are essential. Children need to attend regularly and punctually if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Although I realise there may have been good reasons for absence in this period, [PUPILS NAME]'s attendance will be closely monitored over the next term, during which time a significant improvement will be expected. I am sure this will be the case.

I would like to draw your attention to our School Attendance Policy which outlines the procedures and expectations of [SCHOOL NAME] School.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

I attached a copy of [PUPILS NAME]'s attendance certificate for your information.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Model Letter 2 (Please copy onto your school letterhead)

[Date]

Dear

[PUPIL NAME] [DOB] [CLASS]

Further to my previous letter, dated [1st letter date], I am writing to express my concern that there has been little/no improvement in [PUPIL NAME]'s attendance which is currently [XX] %. This means that [PUPIL NAME] has missed [NO. OF SESSIONS] sessions since the beginning of the academic year.

We will continue to monitor [PUPIL NAME]'s attendance and request that medical evidence is provided should [PUPIL NAME] be absent from school due to illness or for a medical appointment. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that in line with our School Attendance Policy it is the Headteacher's decision whether an absence is authorised.

Should medical evidence not be provided, then the absence will remain unauthorised. However, please note that [SCHOOL NAME] School or the Local Authority will not be liable for any payment requested by the GP.

If no significant improvement is seen we may need to arrange a meeting to formulate an Attendance Action Plan (AAP).

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can do to support you to improve [PUPIL NAME]'s attendance.

I look forward to seeing an immediate and sustained improvement in [PUPIL NAME]'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Model Letter 3

[PARENT NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[POSTCODE]

[DATE]

Dear

[PUPIL NAME] [DOB] [CLASS]

Despite previous letters there has not been the expected improvement in [PUPILS NAME]'s attendance, which is currently [XX]%. This means that [PUPIL NAME] has missed [NO. OF SESSIONS] sessions since the beginning of the academic year.

I would like to invite you to a meeting with me on [DATE] at [TIME] at [NAME OF SCHOOL] to discuss attendance issues and identify ways of improving the situation. The main purpose of the meeting is to complete an Attendance Action Plan (AAP) in which we will agree how to support [PUPILS NAME] in improving attendance and understanding the consequences if the situation does not improve.

I must inform you that should the AAP be unsuccessful, a referral will be made to the Attendance Team at Leicestershire County Council where legal action will be considered.

Please contact me on the telephone number below if this date and time are not convenient.

Yours sincerely

Model Letter 4: Notice of referral to the Attendance Team at Leicestershire County Council

[PARENT NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[POSTCODE]

[DATE]

Dear

[PUPIL NAME] [DOB] [CLASS]

Further to my letter dated XXXX I am disappointed that XXXX's attendance is still significantly below what is expected of pupils, following previous correspondence and interventions. XXXX's attendance currently stands at XX%.

We have not been provided with any evidence which may have prevented your child from attending regularly and/or on time.

Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Further details and guidelines can be accessed from the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk or from Leicestershire County Council www.leics.gov.uk.

This letter is a formal notice that your case is now being referred to the Attendance Team at Leicestershire County Council and you are at risk of receiving a fine and/or prosecution because of your child's unauthorised absence from school.

Please feel free to contact me on XXXXXX or by email at XXXXX to discuss the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix C: Request for Exceptional Leave (Please copy onto your school letterhead)

Please note: the school expects that all parents/carers will ensure that their child attends school as often as possible. Good attendance is an important factor in a child making good progress at school.

I understand that there may be exceptional circumstances where a parent has to request a child's absence during term time. In these circumstances, I am able to authorise absence. If agreed I will then determine the number of days that will be authorised.

Children's Names	Class
.....
.....
.....
.....

I am requesting permission for my child/children to be granted authorised absence for the following reason

.....
.....

from..... to - a total of days

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

Appendix D: Exceptional Leave Reply

Children's Names

Class

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

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

Reply from the Headteacher

<p>I am able to give permission</p> <p>The number of days granted is.....</p> <p>from to</p>
--

<p>I am unable to give permission</p>

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