



# WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE

LONG STRATTON HIGH SCHOOL

## **Policy Consultation & Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Local Governing Body every two years. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Full Governing Body in October 2019. It is due for review in October 2021.

Signature

Headteacher

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Signature

Chair of Local Governing Body

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

# WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

## Policy

Long Stratton High School is committed to providing a full and effective education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Norfolk attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is striving to achieve its set goals.

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents and carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive a full education.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to strive to meet its attendance targets. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Head (Behaviour and Attendance) to ensure that all the following procedures are adhered to.

## Procedures

### AM/PM Registration

Morning registration takes place at 8.30 am in form groups. Pupils are registered in the afternoon at the beginning of Lesson 5 at 2 pm. Pupils are always required to be punctual to registration. Pupils often learn good habits most effectively by example, so staff should attend registration and lessons promptly. Registers should be taken at the beginning of the registration period or lesson as a matter of priority.

### Lesson Registration

All pupils should be registered electronically by their Form Tutor or teacher over the course of the day, using /, \ or N. Where a code has already have been prefilled by the Attendance Officer or another member of staff, do not overwrite that code. If a pupil appears to be in school but is inexplicably not in a lesson, report this immediately to the main office.

Any child who is absent must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (i.e. attendance out of school). Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to

be out of school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for not notifying the absence in advance (eg illness). Parents may not authorise any absence. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on the Headteachers behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.30 am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 2 pm and will be conducted at the beginning of lesson 5 by the class teacher. The registers will close at 2.30 pm.

Pupils arriving after the start of registration but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close (L).

Lateness to school is unacceptable. Pupils who are late to school (after 8.30 am) without an authorised reason will serve a detention. This will be an after school detention for double the amount of time they were late, unless there are safeguarding considerations, when a pastoral detention can be substituted. Parents will be informed by telephone.

### **First Day Absence**

Parents are expected to notify the school on a child's first day of absence. This can be done over the phone (01508 530418) or by email ([attendance@lshs.org.uk](mailto:attendance@lshs.org.uk)), but should be done before 8.30 am if at all possible. Upon notification of a child's absence, the school's Attendance Officer will amend the register electronically. Where this does not happen, the school Attendance Officer will make telephone contact with home, parents or carers as soon as possible to clarify the reason for absence. For any student who is classed as 'Looked After' or is deemed 'at risk' or is an attendance issue, contact will be made as a priority on the first day of absence. The school will use other emergency contacts previously provided by parents in order to find out where the child is.

### **Second Day Absence**

If, after 2 days absence, the school has not received an explanation for a child's absence a standard '2 day letter' will be sent by the school's Attendance Officer. Parents are asked to inform the school daily where a child continues to be absent.

### **Third Day Absence**

The school admin/attendance officer will notify the Head of Key Stage who will a) attempt to make contact with home either by phone or in writing, b) discuss the situation with the Assistant Head and decide whether any other action is appropriate (for example requesting a Police welfare check).

### **Fifth Day Absence**

If it has not already happened, consideration will be given to a home visit, potentially with assistance from Children's Services and the Police.

### **Ten Day's Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority. The school will submit a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team as the law requires. The referral will include details of the action that has been taken.

### **Illness, medical and dental appointments**

Parents are asked to and encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is deemed authorised. If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or goes home because of illness, no absence will be recorded for that session. Pupils should sign out at the main school office before leaving for appointments and sign in again upon their return.

### **Days of religious observance/family bereavement**

The school is sensitive to the requests of parents to remove their children from school for religious reasons e.g. to celebrate religious festivals. Parents should contact the school in such circumstances to give advance notice using the "Notification of Absence Form". Equally, the school aims to respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals. ~~or associate~~ events.

### **Long-term illness and medical needs**

Long Stratton High School is committed to the education of children and young people who are unable to attend school because of medical needs. All such pupils should continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows maintaining as much momentum of their education as possible. With this in mind, we will assess each child's needs on an individual basis and work in collaboration with the medical practitioners to identify and provide appropriate educational support. This is likely to need a referral to the Medical Needs Team, which requires a referral and decision on the level of help needed from a Hospital Consultant (not GP, nor other medical or mental health workers). Where any child is absent for a long period of time, a reintegration plan should be put in place for the child's returns to school, in cooperation between the school, the pupil, the Medical Needs Team, medical practitioners and parents / carers.

### **Other special occasions**

Requests in advance to authorise other absences will be considered individually. The school may take into account the nature of the event, it's frequency (e.g. is it a one-off event, may become a regular occurrence, is it possible to attend out of school time, is it possible to attend for a shorter period), whether the parent gave advance notice and the pupil's overall attendance pattern, however, the Headteacher's decision is final,.

### **Traveller children**

To help ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, the school will dual register the child when the family is traveling. A Traveller child, therefore, will not be removed from the school roll during this time. The school will liaise with the Local Authority to discuss continuity of work.

### **Frequent Absence**

Absence can seriously disrupt the continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. As a school we look for emerging patterns of both unauthorised and authorised absence by individual pupils or groups of pupils as part of our safeguarding arrangements.

It is the responsibility of the form tutor and/or Head of Key Stage to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. These should be passed on to the Assistant Head in charge of attendance.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents or carers and pupil. If this is unsuccessful we may refer to the School Nurse, the GP or other relevant health worker if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases, the school may seek advice from the Early Help Hub or the Local Authority. Where pupils dip below 95% attendance over time without known and evidenced reasons, parents or carers and children will be invited to an Attendance Support Panel or a Fasttrack to Attendance Panel. The panels will consist of the Assistant Head and Attendance Officer, parents or carers and pupil. The panels will draw up an action plan which is to be agreed by all parties. This action plan will be reviewed after 4 to 6 weeks at a further meeting of the panel. Whilst every effort will be made to resolve issues surrounding persistent absence, in some cases it may be necessary to take legal action. Legal action will be considered if the attendance of the pupil has fallen short of the attendance target set within the action plan. This will involve a referral to Norfolk County Council and is likely to result in being summonsed to Norwich Magistrates Court. If found guilty, Magistrates can impose fines, costs and ultimately prison sentences on parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.

### **Legal action**

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or the parent or carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence which is acceptable to the school.

The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents or carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

From 1 September 2017, the criteria for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be:

- 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term; or
- 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

For information, 2 sessions happen each day, so 10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days. 15% of 6 weeks is equivalent to 9 sessions, or 4.5 days.

The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent (or carer) per child payable within 28 days. This increases to £120 payable between 29-42 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

### **A Welcome Back**

We aim to ensure that on returning from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This includes ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up

to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. In periods of longer absence, the Form Tutor or member of the Pupil Development Team will support the pupil in this process. Where appropriate, the Learning Support Unit will assist in the pupil's reintegration into school.

### **Absence notes**

All absences should be explained by e-mail, phone call or letter. Notes received from parents explaining absence are kept for the remainder of the academic year by the Attendance Office. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. In some cases the information may be used at an Attendance Support Panel, Fasttrack to Attendance meeting or ultimately in Court proceedings. It is the Attendance Officer's decision and responsibility to amend the register electronically once a note, e-mail or phone message has been received. The Attendance Officer may choose to discuss the issue with the Head of Key Stage or Assistant Head if they feel that authorisation should not be granted.

### **Holidays in term time**

Holidays during term time are discouraged. Parents are reminded of the very negative effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. Parents must notify the school in advance by completing one of the school's "Notification of Absence" forms.

Each request will be considered individually by the Assistant Head and will take into account the following:

- The timing of the proposed holiday
- Any special circumstances described on the form that explain why the absence could not be taken outside of school days.
- Any evidence provided to substantiate the special or mitigating circumstances

Parents will receive a standard letter notifying them of the school's decision to authorise the absence or not. Should permission not be granted and parents choose to go on holiday regardless, the school will record the absence as 'unauthorised'. The absence may trigger a Fixed Penalty Notice (see Legal Actions section). If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is unauthorised. The school may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within ten school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence.

The school is under no legal obligation to provide work for pupils who are absent for this reason, however, a pupil would be expected to be proactive in catching up on any missed learning. Pupils should inform their teachers of their upcoming absence and catch up any missed work in each subject. Homework on Go4Schools should still be completed.

### **Registers**

Registers are printed out after morning registration and again after the beginning of lesson 5, to act as the fire alarm registers. The full attendance register is printed off once a month and bound into annual volumes for each year group. These are kept for a period of three years after the date on which they were last used.

Registers can only be accessed electronically by staff.

## **Promoting Attendance**

The school takes every opportunity to remind parents and carers of the importance of good attendance. Attendance has been included as one of the ten vital elements of Commitment to Learning. A copy of a pupil's attendance data is included in reports that are sent home termly and attendance is commented on by Form Tutors in the annual report. In this way the school hopes to acknowledge pupils with excellent attendance and highlight the poor attendance of the minority.

## **Attendance Awards**

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good attendance.

- All pupils with 100% attendance within a week will receive a credit
- All pupils with 100% attendance within a term receive a certificate.
- For each year group a termly draw is held in assemblies for those pupils with 100% attendance. The reward is a £10 gift voucher.
- All pupils with 100% attendance for the year receive a certificate presented in the end of year Celebration of Success Assemblies
- All pupils with 100% attendance throughout their 5 years at Long Stratton High School receive a certificate presented in the final assembly for the Year 11 Leavers Assembly
- Tutor groups with the best attendance (best average and best 100% record) are awarded certificates termly.

## **Attendance Targets**

Analysis of performance towards the attendance target is reported by the Assistant Head to the Headteacher twice each half term. This information is reported on a half termly basis to the Local Governing Body. As part of the monitoring, a list of persistent absentees with actions and outcomes is included. From the monitoring, letters are sent regularly to parents of those pupils who have an attendance rate below expectation, explaining likely consequences and impacts, including the potential requirement to provide evidence before illness is authorised. The severity of the letter increases where absence is poorest.

The Local Governing Body set the annual attendance target with due regard to local, regional and national data.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### The registration system

The School uses a computerised system (SIMS) for keeping the school attendance records and Go4Schools to gather attendance data during registration periods. The following national codes are used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances



## Appendix 2

### Categorisation of Absence

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

**1. Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

**2. Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

**3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration