



Lode Heath School

Name of Policy	Attendance Policy
Lead	Deputy Headteacher: Student Support, Development & Standards
Governor Committee	BSII Committee
Date Last Reviewed	June 2023
Review Frequency	Annual
Annual Review Date	Autumn 2024

Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance.....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4. Recording attendance.....	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	6
6. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	7
7. Attendance monitoring.....	7
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	8
9. Links with other policies.....	8
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	8

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Link Governor for attendance is Michael Sullivan

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing school-level absence data (see section 7) and reporting it to governors
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Deputy Headteacher: Student Support, Development and Standards (Nik Hayfield from Jan 2024)

3.4 The Education Welfare & Attendance Manager

The school's EWA manager is responsible for:

- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- › Working with students and their parents/ carers and other staff and external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The EWA manager is Sharon Jukes.

3.5 Form tutors & class teachers

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a lesson by lesson basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via Synergy registers within five minutes of the start of each lesson.

3.6 Administration staff

School administration staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Record additional information on Synergy and will alert the EWA manager and Heads of Year in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time
- › Attend every timetabled lesson on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

Whilst staff are expected to mark a register every lesson, we will take our attendance register during form time at the beginning of each day (except on a Wednesday when it will take place during P1) and again during period 5 each day. It will mark whether every student is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made

- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day, except Wednesdays when they must arrive by 9am.

Registers will be taken within the first 5-10 minutes of all lessons or form time.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling 0121 704 1421 (option 1) or by emailing absence@lodeheath.org.uk (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where an absence is prolonged or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

All pre-planned appointments (e.g. dental, optician appointments, non-urgent GP appointments etc) should take place outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending essential medical appointments (e.g. hospital appointment) will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence.

Planned absence requests should be sent to absence@lodeheath.org.uk or via our website: [Attendance/ Absence | Lode Heath School](#)

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Lateness to school should be rare, if at all. It is the responsibility of the parent/ carers for ensuring their child's punctuality and attendance. A student who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Students who are late to school will be issued a detention.

Where there are widespread issues on a given day (e.g. due to weather, or an accident), detentions are not issued up to an agreed time.

Where public transport is a concern, we advise parents/ carers that their child may well be able to leave home later and arrive to school sooner by walking rather than relying on overcrowded buses.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without reason, the school will:

- › Text the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police and/ or children's services.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- › Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving additional agencies/ service providers.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels each term via their report. However, parents/ carers have immediate access to their child's attendance information via Synergy.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as those which are unavoidable and cannot be planned at any other time. For example: a funeral of a family member.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 7 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our website:

[Attendance/ Absence | Lode Heath School](#)

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- › Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision as to whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school maintains a regular and high-profile focus to promote attendance through:

- Assemblies
- Form time with students
- Character & Personal Development activities
- Focus group work-shops
- Communication with parents/ carers

Attendance is also considered during rewards & recognition strategies e.g. postcards home, credits and attendance to key events/ activities.

7. Attendance monitoring

Key staff monitor attendance and punctuality on a regular basis. Where patterns or trends are identified, parents/ carers and students are contacted to identify any barriers which may need to be addressed. A proactive and supportive approach is taken to ensure students attend school regularly and on time.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

The school will compare attendance data to the local and national statistics, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families

- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- › Utilise a wide range of strategies to support and promote at least good attendance including sending 'nudge' letters to inform parents/ carers of their child's attendance and punctuality record in comparison to their peers; providing workshops & setting attendance challenges for students; providing family support via external agencies.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum each academic year by the Deputy Headteacher: Student Support, Development & Standards. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board or delegated committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration

L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
---	------------------------	---

Appendix – other information:

Children who are absent or missing from education: see the Child Protection policy

Other relevant policies:

Children with health needs who cannot attend school

Where the school has concerns that a child is absent from education, we will respond in line with our statutory duties and local policies. Local support is available via the Inclusion Service: [Managing school attendance](#).

Other suggested avenues of support can be found within the Child Protection policy.

Persistent and Severe Absence: The definition of persistently absent (PA) student as set by the DFE is a student with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). Severe absence is a student with 50% or less attendance.