ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

Every pupil has the right to a full-time education and we have high attendance expectations for all pupils. The Attendance policy will be applied fairly and consistently but, in doing so, we will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils in school we aim to:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Develop effective partnerships with supporting services and agencies.
- Recognise and address the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised absence:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones or emails the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school and gives the reason that it was to go shopping for school shoes, this will not mean it is authorised absence.
- Authorisation for leave of absence in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, in line with the law.

Unauthorised absence:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence will be unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- An absence is classified as unauthorised if there is no reason given for the child's absence. For example, no notification has been received by the school and the school has been unable to make contact with the parent/carer.
- When a leave of absence in term time is not agreed, or no application has been made, or the pupil does not return on an agreed date, that leave of absence will be unauthorised and the parent/carer may incur a penalty notice.

It is the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a child's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised, following the guidelines set out by the Local Authority.

Persistent absence (PA):

The DFE define a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at 10% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised.

Where a pupil's unauthorised absence amounts to 10 sessions or more within a 10 week period, the Education Welfare Service will be notified and the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent/carer of the child.

Penalty Notice costs

With effect from 19 August 2024, if this is the first penalty notice, then a payment of £160.00 is required within 28 days of the penalty notice being received by the parent/carer. This sum is reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days. If this is the second penalty notice issued for the same child within 3 years of the first penalty notice, payment of £160.00 is required within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full within 28 days, the LA is required to start proceedings in the magistrates court. If you plead guilty or are found guilty, the courts can impose a maximum fine of up to £1000.

REGISTRATION

Codes:

There are a series of codes which are used to denote authorised and authorised absence. It is the school's responsibility to ensure the correct codes are recorded and that patterns and trends in children's absence are analysed.

Late Pupils:

The school gates are open between 8.35am and 8.45am. Pupils who arrive during this time are marked using the normal '/' code. Pupils arriving after 8.45am (when the gates close) but before 9:05am will be marked using the 'L' code. Pupils arriving after 9:05am (when the register closes) will be marked with

the U code which indicates that a child arrived after 9:05am and that this was not authorised by the school.

Lunchtime Registration

The lunchtime register for Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is completed at 12.30pm. Lower Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 2 register is completed between 1-1.30pm.

Medical appointments:
Children will be marked as M for a medical appointment.
Requests for leave of absence:
We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. For this reason, as a general rule, we do not authorise leave of absence (including holidays) in term time. Leave of Absence forms should be completed BEFORE taking your child out of school during term time. These forms can be requested from the School Office.

The Headteacher has the discretion to make exceptions to this rule and can authorise leave of absence for exceptional circumstances, when the leave of absence is for no more than 10 days. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Religious Observance:
Children may be absent from school to take part in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should give advance notice if they intend to take their child out of school for religious observance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

Role of parents:

- Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing the children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- Praise and reward good attendance, even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- Contact the school by phone (01264 790375), through Parent Mail, Dojo or email (reception@ludgershallcastle.wilts.sch.uk) by 9.15am, and when they are expected to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illness.

- If appropriate, arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a parent or sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- Ensure that a Leave of Absence Form is completed before taking your child out of school during term time.
- Ensure that, wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children wear their P.E. kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

Role of the Class Teacher:

- Encourage good attendance.
- Ensure that registers are promptly and correctly marked.
- Set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn.
- Provide engaging and worthwhile learning experiences that encourage students to attend lessons regularly.
- Listen to and value children's views.
- Make initial contact with parents when concerns arise.

Role of the School:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Engage with parents/carers to encourage open communication channels between home and school to report any absences.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent-condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Monitor pupil's individual attendance and develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Adequately provide for pupils who are experiencing difficulties by accessing additional support services for example, the school's Parent Support Advisor, to try and remove the barriers to attendance. Support may also be formalised in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer to implement sanctions for those pupils when support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with.
- Refer persistent absenteeism to the Local Authority for Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Implement incentives suggested by the School Council to reward the best attendance. For example, an attendance trophy for best class attendance in a weekly assembly.

Role of Governing Body:

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Role of the Local Authority (LA):
The Local Authority provides and Education and Welfare Officer who works closely with the school to monitor attendance. The LA may also support the school with fines or legal action to tackle poor attendance where appropriate.

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

Where we have concerns around a pupil's attendance we may intervene in one or more of the following ways:

- The School Admin Assistant, is responsible for monitoring school attendance. She will review the attendance of all pupils on a half termly basis and monitor those with an attendance of less than 96%. Pupils identified as a cause for concern or less than 90% attendance may be monitored on a more regular basis.
  The senior leader who is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is the Headteacher.
- A letter may be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems, informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending.
- Where patterns are identified the school may set up a School Attendance Meeting between the parents/carers, the Admin Assistant and the Headteacher to discuss the pattern and resolve any issues preventing attendance.
- The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if there appears to be no improvement the family may be referred to the Education and Welfare Officer.

Attendance Quick View	
Late Pupils	Pupils who arrive after 8.45am. These children will be marked as Late ('L' code). Pupils arriving after 9:05am will be marked as arriving after the register has closed ('U' code).

Pupils Absent from school	
1st Action	Parents/carers need to notify the school of any reasons for absence via telephone, email, Dojo or Parentmail. Telephone 01264 790375 Email reception@ludgershallcastle.wilts.sch.uk

Vulnerable Pupils	ALL pupils on the vulnerable list are contacted daily if absent, to ensure communication remains open with these families.

No reason for absence	If no reason for absence is received the office will make contact using parent/carers contact numbers.

Still no response	Codes of unauthorised absence are recorded on the Register.

Attendance Monitoring Timetable	
Every two weeks	Attendance team meet to monitor attendance. Identify cohort below 90%. Cohort monitored throughout the term. Any pupil with further unauthorised absences may be referred for a penalty notice.
1st Response Action	After first 5 weeks, admin officer to send a dojo message to parents or phone call.
2nd Response Action	After 10 weeks, attendance letter sent. School to monitor over the next 10 weeks. Any pupil with 10 unauthorised sessions over a 10 week period may be referred for a penalty notice.
No improvement in attendance	If no improvement is seen within the next 10 week period, parents/carers will be invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting.
School Attendance Meeting	Meeting held and minutes taken, whether parents attend or not.
2nd School Attendance Meeting	A second School Attendance Meeting may be issued if attendance doesn't improve following on from the initial meeting. School will begin liaising with the Education Welfare Officer.
Special consideration	If it becomes apparent that other agencies need to be involved due to additional circumstances the Admin Assistant may consider removing a pupil from attendance monitoring.

Absence reaches a total of 10 sessions (5 days)	If at any time a pupils absence totals 10 sessions within a 10 week period, parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed every year to ensure that it continues to meet the general principle.

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