

# Larkswood Attendance Policy

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Adopted by: Larkswood Academy Council

Date: January 2017

Review date: September 2019

## Overview

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You must make sure your child gets a full-time education that meets their needs (eg if they have special educational needs or a disability). You can send your child to school or educate them yourself.

Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

You'll be contacted by either:

- the school - if your child is enrolled in school and doesn't turn up (even if they're only absent for a day)
- the council's education welfare officer - if they think your child isn't getting a suitable education at home

You can be prosecuted if you don't give your child an education. You'll normally get warnings and offers of help from the local council first.

You can get education and attendance information from your council.

### When your child can miss school

You can only allow your child to miss school if either:

- they're too ill to go in
- you've got advance permission from the school

There's [extra support available](#) if your child can't go to school for long periods because of a health problem.

Please meet with the school Attendance Officer to discuss.

## Holidays in Term Time

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You have to get permission from the Head teacher /Head of School if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

You can only do this if:

- you make an application to the head teacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
- there are exceptional circumstances

It's up to the head teacher how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted

Further information can be found via: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

**The Home School Agreement lays out an expectation that parents and carers will abide by the academy's Attendance Policy**

## Our unique approach

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We pride ourselves on being an inclusive school, where we celebrate diversity and difference and acknowledge the richness that this brings to our school community.

We aim to provide opportunities for all children to access a broad, balanced and creative curriculum, regardless of age, attainment, ethnicity, language or background that is personalised to meet children's individual needs.

## Introduction

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This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open.

## Why Regular Attendance is so important:

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## Learning

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Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## Safeguarding

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Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## The Law relating to attendance

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*Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have. Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'. The Law relating to safeguarding Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.*

## Attendance of Looked After Children

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The school has a designated teacher responsible for overseeing the education of children in public care. This role will include the monitoring of attendance rates which are reported to the Education Attendance Service. Any concerns should be notified as soon as possible to the carer, social worker and School Attendance Officer for vulnerable children.

The designated LAC teacher at Larkwood primary Academy is : Quynh Hua

## The Role of the School Office

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The school office is the first point of contact for parents/carers in connection with attendance. They have a crucial role in communicating reasons for children's absence given by parents/carers. They will note any reasons for absence given in a phone message, text, email or in person to them and record them on SIMS. If a child arrives after the register has been called, the appointed staff members will record the child's name and their time of arrival in the Late Book and enter the number of minutes late on the SIMs Register. These records need to be kept accurately as they may be required as evidence, should a case of persistent lateness be taken to court by the Education Attendance Service.

Children arriving late for school will be accounted for at the school office and issued with a late pass which must be handed to their class teacher.

Class registers officially close at 9.20am. Children who arrive after this time will be recorded with an unauthorised absence.

The school office is responsible for ensuring all daily registers are complete and for monitoring individual attendance and punctuality on a daily basis, referring any concerns or queries to the Senior Leadership Team.

## Change of Address

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If a family are moving to a new address, parents/carers must provide school with their new address and contact numbers. If the family are moving overseas, parents/carers must provide travel documents and a forwarding address. Failure to do this will result in a referral to the 'Children Missing Education' officer at the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

## Telephone Numbers

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There are times when we need to contact parents/carers. You must provide the school with up to date numbers if you don't then something important may be missed. There will be checks made on telephone numbers and contact details throughout the academic year.

## Moving to Another School

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Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are removing their child to start at another school. The parents/carers must provide the name of the new school. If a family are moving to a new address, which requires the child to attend a new school but the child is not yet registered then parents/carers must provide school with their new address. Occasionally children may move away from the school without notifying us. We make every reasonable effort to locate the child and their family. Removal from roll may be backdated if we subsequently receive proof of dates of attendance at the new school. If we are unable to make communication with the family, the child is kept on roll until we receive confirmation from the new school and then the Education Attendance Service and Children Missing Education Service are notified.

## Promoting Regular Attendance

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Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility parents, children and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in newsletters
- Report to you how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements and via the newsletter ;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Promote with parents/carers children and staff raising attendance levels across the school.

## Understanding types of absence

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Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason like illness Medical/dental/optician appointments should be made outside of school time when possible. The appointment letter should be shown to the school office in advance. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. This type of absence can lead to the London borough of Waltham Forest using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

## Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

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A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absent mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately. Persistently absent children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic monitoring where absence affects attainment.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the London borough of the Waltham Forest Snr Educational Welfare Officer.

## Absence Procedures

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If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on everyday of absence;
- Or, you can come into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.
- If your child is due to have a planned medical procedure/operation, you must notify the school in advance and provide documentary evidence.

## If your child is absent we will

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- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team if absences persist;
- Ask you to provide medical evidence, for example, a doctor's letter or prescription medication if attendance falls below 90%
- Refer the matter to the London Borough of Waltham Forest Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

## The School Attendance Officer

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Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from the London borough of Waltham Forest. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices, Fines (£60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest has a Snr. Educational Welfare Officer who can be contacted on: 0208 4963000

## Lateness

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- Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and start the day unsettled. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing for the child.
- Poor punctuality can also encourage absence.
- The school must ensure every child is recorded in case of emergency evacuation.
- Children arriving late for school MUST go directly to the school office to be recorded in the late book and must be recorded as late on the register. They will be given a dated late pass and must hand this to the class teacher before joining the rest of the class.

## How we manage lateness

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The school day starts at 8.45am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 9.00am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. Children who arrive after 8:45 but before 9:00 are coded "L" (late) in the register. Those children who arrive after 9:20 are coded "U" which is an unauthorised absence. 10 sessions of unauthorised absences may result in a Penalty Notice Warning being issued by LBWF

## Children picked up late after school

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Such incidents can cause distress to children who are keen to see their parents/carers at the end of the school day and should be avoided at all cost.

Parents/carers must telephone the school office if they are running late and advise on the time of their arrival in school. On arrival, the school office will ask parents/carers to fill in a brief form detailing the reason for late collection.

The school will make all reasonable effort to contact parents/carers who fail to collect their child after school.

Please refer to the school's Dropping Off and Collection Policy which states if a parent/carer or an authorised adult has not collected the child/children from the school by 3.30pm on more than two occasions it will trigger the activation of child protection procedures including making a safeguarding referral to Social Care at LBWF.

## Special Leave in Term Time

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Taking leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence. All applications for leave must be made in advance. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

If special leave is granted, parents/carers must give a return date and notify the school as soon as possible if this changes.

If a child fails to return on the agreed date, the school will refer the case to the Snr Educational Welfare Officer. The child will remain on roll whilst an investigation is carried out. If the child does not return to school the school will then contact the 'Children Missing Education' Officer and will liaise regarding the correct common transfer file.

If the child is subject to child protection plans social services will be immediately notified. The Local Governing Body will not authorise any leave at times when children are scheduled to take public examinations. Parents/carers will be notified as soon as these dates are known. If children are on leave without authorisation the London Borough of Waltham Forest has the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices of £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004).

## What is the role of the child?

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Children are expected to attend school regularly, punctually and appropriately prepared for lessons. The target attendance for all children is 100%. We aim to make children aware of these responsibilities and ensure that they want to come to school by offering a safe and stimulating experience when they are here.

## Registration

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Class registers are legal documents and must be treated accordingly. They must not leave the school premises. The class teacher will ensure that the registration period is orderly and calm and the registers are called promptly and accurately every morning and every afternoon. Registration should be taken at the same time to ensure consistency in identifying latecomers.

## The role of the Senior Leadership Team

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The Senior Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body will monitor attendance on a weekly and half termly basis. They will make sure that parents and carers are aware of their responsibilities around attendance.

## Monitoring attendance and punctuality

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The senior leadership team works closely with class teachers, the school office and the London Borough of Waltham Forest Education Attendance Service. School registers are monitored daily to identify class attendance and punctuality percentages. Individual attendance and punctuality is monitored on a daily basis.

Every week in the achievement assembly, the classes with the best punctuality and attendance for the previous week are given class certificates. Each term the classes with the best attendance are invited with their parents to an attendance tea party with the Head of School/Headteacher

During visits with the School's Snr Educational Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Waltham Forest all children's punctuality and attendance are discussed. After determining whether there are valid reasons for lateness or absences, parents/carers can be written to or invited to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or School Attendance Officer to discuss how to resolve any identified problems. If there is a pattern of poor attendance the school will refer the child to the Education Attendance Service for a School Attendance Panel meeting (SAP).

## Co-ordinating responses to concerns about attendance & punctuality

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School attendance officers check the registers weekly for outstanding unauthorised absences. Parents/carers are contacted to explain the reason for absence. Only the school may authorise this absence. Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school can refer the child to the Snr Educational Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Waltham Forest. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, court proceedings to prosecute parents can be used.

## What is the role of the Headteacher/ Head of School?

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The Headteacher /Head of School will ensure that the school meets all legal requirements, sets targets for attendance and publishes attendance figures. The Headteacher has a duty under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the London Borough of Waltham Forest where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a child has had an unauthorised absence for a continuous period. Details of attendance and any connected initiatives are reported to the local Academy Council in each of the Headteacher's reports.

## The role of the Academy Council

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The Academy Council has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance in school and should be familiar with the current legislation and the school's registration system. They can request reports on attendance and procedures as necessary. They must ensure that the school is working above the government's benchmark of 95% attendance for primary schools. One Academy Council member has particular responsibility for attendance and liaison with the Head of School /Headteacher .



## The role of the Snr Educational Welfare Officer

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The Snr Educational Welfare Officer meets with the Headteacher/Head of School and is the point of contact between the Borough Education Attendance Service and the school.

She/he advises the school and monitors performance in relation to attendance and punctuality. She/he also takes referrals from the school for more focused interventions with particular families. Intervening with children who are causing concern because of punctuality or attendance

These interventions include home visits, interviews at school, support for families with particular problems which affect attendance and punctuality. Where necessary, appropriate, legal action against families who are not fulfilling their responsibilities under the Education Act will be taken. These include Penalty Notices, Fines (£60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004)) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

## Summary

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The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents /carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and children as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.