

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Learning Academies Trust

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1. AIMS

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

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#) ➤
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Trust board

The Trust board is responsible for:

- › Making sure all schools the Trust fulfil expectations and statutory duties ›
- Ensuring a Trust Policy is in place

3.2 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 ›
- Appointing a governor with specific responsibility for attendance

3.3 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 pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies ›
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › 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
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at this school is **Penny Peters** and can be contacted via **01752 365730 school.office@mayfloweracademy.co.uk**

3.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer at this school is **Margaret Smith** and can be contacted via **01752 365730**
school.office@mayfloweracademy.co.uk

3.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at morning and afternoon registration sessions.

3.7 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.8 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 **8.40am** 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

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil 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 pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by **08:55am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **08:55am** and will be kept open until **09:30am**. The register for the second session will be taken when the pupils return from their lunch break (staggered according to year group).

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **8:40am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

Mayflower Community Academy

01752 365730

School.office@mayfloweracademy.co.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil'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

A pupil 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
- All children arriving after 8.55am, following the closure of the Academy gates, must enter through the main entrance and sign in at the reception desk where this will be recorded
- Children who regularly arrive into school late will trigger school action. In the first instance this will involve a conversation between the parent and either the Family Support Advisor or Administrator responsible for attendance
- Following this, there will be a triangulated review of the child's achievement, wellbeing and readiness to learn at the weekly welfare and inclusion team meeting.

The Academy will work alongside the EWO to identify persistent absence or changes in patterns of behaviour. These families will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In cases where all school action has failed to ensure that the pupil is in school on time every day, the EWO will intervene.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil'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 pupil's emergency contacts, the school may **involve the EWO, the Gateway or the Police.**
- 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
- Call 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 an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels **termly.**

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil 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 pupil is authorised to be absent for.

It will be the decision of the Headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term time absence will be considered on an individual basis, taking the impact on the child's education into account. (See Appendix 2)

The Headteacher will also look very carefully at the child's previous attendance record and should there be concerns, for example, should the child's average attendance be below 95% it is highly unlikely that the Headteacher will agree to authorise any further absence.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via **the main school office.** The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 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 on 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 pupil 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

- A whole academy ethos which focuses on pupils' wellbeing and academic achievement.
- Continued support at school to enable pupils to access their learning and feel positive about what they can achieve.
- A community approach to learning with support for parents as well as pupils.
- A celebration of attendance in assemblies and newsletters.
- A shared understanding passed to parents/carers of the impact of their child's attendance on their learning.

7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The school will:

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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils 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 class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils 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 pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil 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 of pupils 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

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the Trust CEO. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust board.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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Authorised absence

C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil 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 pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Plymouth City Council Guidance on Exceptional Circumstances

The following is a guide as to what could/could not be exceptional circumstances for approving a child's absence from school:

Exceptional circumstances:

- A specified, limited period may be granted when a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness.
- Funeral of immediate family member
- Religious observance
- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been

- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- One day of absence could be authorised for a wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family member's graduation ceremony/passing out parade
- Medical appointments (parents/carers should be encouraged to arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours when possible). If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. Schools should not authorise a whole day's absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.

Appendix 3 Strategies for Improving School Attendance

Strategies for improving school attendance

ALL parents and carers are provided with attendance data three times each year:

- Parent-teacher meetings
- Annual interim report
- Annual final report
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If attendance falls below 92% the Headteacher writes to the individual pupils' parents. Monthly monitoring in place

If attendance does not improve, then a further letter requesting medical evidence for all absences is sent.

Copy of the letter is shared with school Parent Support Adviser.

School meeting convened.

Monthly monitoring with EWO continues.

If attendance does not improve, a referral to the Educational Welfare Service is made. School EWO may telephone or visit the parent and/or send a percentage letter.

If attendance does not improve a series of actions may occur:

- EWO send a Penalty Warning Letter
- EWO sends a Penalty Fine
- EWO invites Parent to an Interview Under Caution

Appendix 4 LAT Attendance Thresholds

Thresholds	The following are suggested actions at each threshold:
100%>	Schools reward regular attendance
99-98%	<p>School Based Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools monitor on a weekly / monthly basis • EWO monthly visits for discussion and overall monitoring • Any early signs of attendance dropping – school to contact parent – monthly activity, following EWO visit
97%	<p>School Based Early Intervention for pupils with attendance at, or below, 97%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school office will send a letter pointing out deterioration in attendance levels • Attendance officer to notify Leaders/ teachers to monitor – praise and encouragement • School to consider meeting with parents to explain attendance and set attendance target. • Keep in contact with parents on a regular basis. Provide encouragement where improvement has been made. • Discuss the likelihood of attendance intervention with the Education Welfare Officer unless improvement is made.
96-95%	<p>At risk of Persistent Absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School to continue actions as above • School to notify EWO of potential case and take advice • School to work with parent to develop a plan of support to encourage regular attendance.

<95%	<p>Pupils deteriorating to 95%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted school support / Pastoral / SLT involvement. • Attendance target set • Support Plan • Parental Agreement in place • Parents to provide medical evidence to authorise any further absence due to ill health • Termly review meeting • Failure to engage referral to EWO
92%-85%	<p>EWO involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further unauthorised absence to result in a referral to the LA for consideration of a Fixed Penalty notice or court action. <p>Make first day calls as above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWO involved and all cases discussed with school. Agreed actions with school and EWO responsibilities clearly agreed • Maintain the approaches set out at the previous thresholds. • Ask parents to attend a school-based meeting with Pastoral Team, HT and the EWO. Use the meeting to explore why pupil has not attended regularly. • Discuss detrimental effect on learning. • Reach agreements for rapid improvements over the next half term. • Remind the parent that full attendance is the aim • Consider using a parent contract. Monitor attendance very closely and keep in regular contact with the parent, either to praise attendance levels or to show ongoing concern. • If improvement is not shown, consideration to take legal action.