

# Lache Primary School



**Live to learn, learn to live**

## **Attendance Policy**

**Review Body: Governors**

**Approved by Governors: Sept 2023**

**Review Date: September 2024**

## Introduction

Lache Primary School believes that to be successful in their learning, skills and social development and in order to make the most out of their time at school, **'regular'** attendance of all pupils is essential.

**'Lache Primary School considers regular school attendance to be 97%'**

**(If your child is absent for 5 days I a school year their attendance will be 97.5%- 6 days absence will fall below 97%)**

- 1) We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.
- 2) We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.
- 3) We also recognise it is important to provide support to our most vulnerable pupils to ensure that they receive the same opportunities through regular attendance at school.
- 4) Once a child is enrolled at school, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day, unless prevented from doing so by illness or other exceptional circumstances for which absence is authorised by the school.
- 5) Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. This register will also indicate whether an absence was 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

### **Definition of 'authorised absence':**

- 6) An absence is classified as authorised when the school has ascertained that a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Exceptional cases of religious observances or particular family circumstances may also result in an authorised absence being granted by the school.

- 7) Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or allows a child to stay away from school to celebrate a family birthday or go on a family outing, or to have a 'lazy day', this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

**Definition of 'unauthorised absence':**

- 8) Legally, an absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Parents cannot give permission for their child to be off school without the consent of the school. Therefore, all absences will be unauthorised if a child is away from school without the school's consent.

**Requirement to provide medical evidence**

- 9) If your child's attendance falls below 95% or there is a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, you may be required to provide school with some form of medical evidence. (see below)

Failure to provide such evidence will result in the absence being unauthorised and can leave a parent vulnerable to legal action being considered. (This could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty)

*[Fixed Penalties (FPN) are issued by the local authority for absences of 10 school sessions (5 days) or more for holidays or for 10 school sessions in a school term known as Irregular Attendance]*

**Definition of medical evidence**

- 10) Medical evidence may take the form of:

- a) A doctors certificate (optional)
- b) Medication containing child's name and date of issue
- c) Counterfoil from repeat prescription
- d) Hospital appointment letters

- 11) This list is not exhaustive and other evidence may be offered and the school may make a judgement on whether to accept it or not

## **Aims and objectives**

12) Our aims and objectives in relation to pupils' attendance are to:

- a) maximise attendance so that all pupils can gain full access to our curriculum and be enabled to reach their full academic potential and achieve a high level of personal and social well-being;
- b) ensure that pupils are safe and that their whereabouts are known;
- c) eliminate unauthorised absence;
- d) discourage families from arranging holidays during school terms;
- e) ensure that parents and carers understand clearly when it is appropriate to keep their children off school and when this constitutes unauthorised absence;
- f) ensure that school staff and parents and carers are familiar with and adhere to our procedures for registering pupils' attendance, and reporting, recording and following up a pupil's absence or lateness;
- g) ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance;
- h) ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities in registering pupils' daily attendance and investigating absences;
- i) make clear to parents and carers the consequences of failing to ensure that their children attend school;
- j) ensure that children enjoy coming to school and are highly motivated to attend regularly and consistently.

## **Procedure if a child is absent/late**

13) The following process will be carried out by all classes in school:

If a child arrives after 9.00am but before 9.30am they will be recorded as late (L).

If they come in after 9.30am, but before 1pm they will be classed as absent for that session and be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised)

- a) When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence on the register (SIMS)
- b) A Code 'N' will be placed on the register until a reason for absence has been secured (NB – this must be updated within a week)

- c) The absence is recorded in the office.
  - d) If parents/carers have contacted the school office regarding any recorded absences, these will be updated in the office.
  - e) Dinner Registers are sent to the school office (these double up as Evacuation Registers) where they will be updated to include any late arrivals.
  - f) Any pupils not in school and with no known reason for absence are passed to the Learning Mentor
  - g) Learning Mentor will follow up all unknown absences (with Family Support Worker) – this may include, messaging, phone call and home visits.
  - h) If any Children In Care or those on Safeguarding register at Child Protection are absent, appropriate agencies will be informed. A home visit may also be arranged.
  - i) All Home Visits and any additional comments are recorded on SIMS
  - j) If Safeguarding concerns exist around absences, these will be recorded on CPOMS.
  - k) Continued absence will trigger an attendance panel meeting. (see Attendance Panel Procedures below)
- 14) The school encourages parents to telephone the school to inform them of their child's absence through illness, on the first morning of absence. This prevents school office staff/Learning Mentor having to make numerous phone calls and provides reassurance of a child's safety in the event that parents cannot be contacted by telephone, for any reason. Parents should not use e-mail to inform the school of a child's absence. They can, however, use the school app (Weduc) to inform us of the child's absence.
- 15) A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has an unavoidable medical appointment.
- 16) If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## **18) Requests for leave of absence for a child**

19) We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible and do not miss out on crucial learning which may put them at an educational disadvantage. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances in which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special religious occasion, exceptional sporting event (such exceptional circumstances would not include normal events such as birthdays or regular religious ceremonies). We expect parents and carers to contact the school to obtain authorisation at least a week in advance.

Normally such exceptional requests will be granted. However, if a pupil's current attendance is below 90% - exceptional circumstances **will not** normally be granted.

20) Parents and carers have no statutory right to withdraw their children from school for a family holiday. Children are required to attend school for 190 days in a school year, leaving 175 days of weekends and school holidays. Parents and carers can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) should holidays be taken during school term time.

21) Our school considers pupils' continuous attendance at school to be so essential for their academic achievement that it is not our policy to routinely authorise an allocation of term time leave of absence to families.

Each case will be considered individually by the headteacher.

### **a) Long-term absence**

22) When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that, where possible, the child can keep in touch with the learning going on in their class.

23) If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Local Authority (LA) support services, so that arrangements, in exceptional circumstances, can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school, where possible.

### **Repeated unauthorised absences**

24) The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school to discuss the reasons. If the situation does not improve, parents will be asked to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting.

### **Procedure for Attendance Panel Meetings**

25) The following procedure is aimed at rapidly improving attendance with the support of parents/carers through the setting of targets:

- a) Continued absence or lateness after registration will trigger an attendance panel meeting.
- b) Attendance Panel Meetings will be run by Learning Mentor and at least one other member of the Attendance Team.
- c) Parents/Carers are invited to attend the Attendance Panel Meeting to discuss their child's attendance / lateness and to agree a plan to improve attendance / punctuality setting targets with the school which will be monitored and reviewed at an agreed time.
- d) Failure to improve on these targets will result in the school referring to Education Welfare Services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- e) The governors, supported by the Education Welfare Service, reserve the right to consider taking legal action, or issuing a fixed penalty notice, against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

26) While the school would always seek to avoid disadvantaging children who, through illness or other circumstances, have been unavoidably absent from school, we do, from time to time, give attendance incentive rewards and certificates for children with 100 per cent attendance over a term or a whole school year, in order to maintain a focus on the importance of regular attendance. However, there is the opportunity for all to achieve and be rewarded with good attendance, through the attendance HEROES initiative.

27) Details of these awards are contained in the Attendance Action Plan and the parent's mini policy. These may change over time to ensure they remain appropriate.

**a) Attendance targets**

28) The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors as part of our annual target-setting process. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

**a) Monitoring and review**

29) It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they can be.

30) The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years (for Children in Care – these records need to be kept indefinitely).

31) The rates of attendance will be reported half termly to governors and via school/parent comms weekly.

32) This policy will be reviewed every three years by the governing body or sooner if necessary.

**Information about Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for Unauthorised Leave of Absence (Holidays during term Times) and Irregular Attendance.**

Families who continue to take their children out of school for a family holiday, or where there is irregular attendance, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine of £60 per child per parent, payable within 21 days of issue. If unpaid this will increase to £120 to be paid within 28 days.

Where both parents have responsibility for their child, whether together or not, each parent will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. The definition of "parent" includes all



natural parents, whether they are married or not; and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

If a parent has parental responsibility but no day-to-day care consideration will be given as to the degree of their compliance in the holiday. Parents without day-to-day care may not be aware of the holiday until the last minute, as they may not have regular contact with the child. If school is not made aware of the intention to take a holiday and children are absent from school, phone calls and a letter advising that we are trying to contact you will be sent due to the absence becoming a safeguarding issue. A personal letter will be sent advising that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued and also inviting parents or carers into school to discuss the reasons for their absence.

For more information regarding FPN, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforceschool-attendance>

## **Appendix 1 – Attendance Guidance and information for parents**



**Lache Primary School**

### **Attendance Guidance and Information for Parents**

**“ Improving attendance is everyone’s business “**

We are here to support you and your child. Attendance every day is crucial to your child’s educational start in life. This guidance and information sets out our partnership with you and our expectations.

We understand that your child may be ill and need to stay at home. However, if they are just tired or feeling a little ‘under the weather’, please send them in as we will

always call you if we think they should be at home with you. More often than not, once they are with their friends, they perk up and are fine. If you decide that your child is too ill to attend school, please ring **01244 470380** before 8.30am to let us know. If your child is off again the next day you must continue inform school each day. **Please do not Weduc teachers.**

We appreciate that children may need to go to appointments but many of these can be made after school if requested.

### **THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW...**

- Learning begins at **8.50 am**. Your child will be marked as late if they arrive any time after **9.00am** and they will also have missed 10 minutes of their learning. This could add up to **50 minutes of lost learning a week**.
- If your child's attendance drops **below 97%** we will invite you for an informal discussion and see how we can help you and your child improve their attendance. A plan will be agreed and we will work with you to ensure that it is successful.
- If your child's attendance drops **below 95%** you will be invited to a formal panel meeting with the attendance team and Head teacher or Deputy head. At this meeting we will discuss a way forward, but you may also be required to provide medical evidence for your child's absences.
- If we do not receive a notification about your child's absence, we will attempt to contact you via telephone. If we still can't contact you our learning mentor, Mrs Lawson, will pay you a visit to ensure that all is ok. If you are not home, the absence will be unauthorised and a member of the senior leadership will discuss the absence with you on your child's return to school.
- A member of the attendance team will be at the front door to greet any late comers and will be asking why they are late. If your child is late three times within a two-week period a member of the SLT will call you to discuss.
- If you are consistently late, we will invite you in for a meeting to discuss any help we may be able to offer you and your family.
- If your child misses 10 sessions (1 session = ½ a day) over a term you may receive a fixed penalty notice from the County Council. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, then the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and it is deemed an 'unauthorised leave of absence' by the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent.
- The school will not authorise holidays in term time. However, if your holiday is for 5 days but your child's attendance is above **97%** you will not receive an FPN . Exceptional circumstances may be considered, such as religious observances or an exceptional sporting event. However, these requests will not be granted if the child's attendance is below 90%.
- Holidays forms must be completed prior to the holiday. They are available at the school office and in your child's classroom.

**We believe in rewarding Attendance HEROES: ( Here Every day, Ready, On time, Enjoying School)**

- Every Friday we celebrate good attendance as part of our Celebration Assembly.
- All classes go in the 'Attendance Hat' at the start of every half term; then the class with the best attendance of the week goes in again.
- The top 2 classes will have golden time the following week.
- At the end of each half term a class will be pulled out of the hat; they will win the attendance cup filled with Heroes chocolates.
- Once every half term we will do 'HEROES WEEK' when the whole school is encouraged to be Here, Every day, Ready, On time. Children will receive a certificate.
- At the end of each half term children with at least 97% attendance will receive a wristband with a chance to collect all 6 throughout the year.
- All children with 100% attendance at the end of the year will receive a voucher.

For the full Attendance Policy please visit [www.lache.cheshire.sch.uk](http://www.lache.cheshire.sch.uk)

It is your responsibility to get your child to school on time and we know you don't want them to miss out on vital learning. If you are finding it difficult please come in and speak to Mrs Lawson.

Again, many thanks for your continued support,

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Kate Seager

## Appendix 2 – Attendance Flowchart

