

Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery School



Attendance Policy

Date Reviewed: September 2022

Next review date: September 2023

Introduction

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and
- act early to address patterns of absence

The Government also expects parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.

Lovers' Lane Primary School shares the Government's view that raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils from an early age can fulfil their potential: pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less. We use our 'SWAN' values to promote attendance.

Policy's aims

At Lovers' Lane Primary School, we aim to:-

- Promote a welcoming and positive school environment, where children feel safe, happy and valued along with encouraging pupils to have a sense of their own responsibility
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality. Our policy applies to Nursery and Foundation age children in order to promote good habits at an early age
- Raise awareness and involve parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure absences are followed up promptly
- Check registers regularly, to note unexplained absences and identify patterns of absence or lateness
- Involve other agencies when attendance or lateness gives cause for concern

To promote regular attendance Lovers' Lane offers:

- A consistently timed start and finish to the school day for all year groups.
- Face-to-face contact between class teachers, parents, and carers at the start and end of every school day

- Rewards for pupils with good attendance
- Attendance information to be shared at termly at TLC (Termly Learning Conference) in Autumn and Spring terms, which is our Parents' Evening and takes the form of a structured conversation
- An annual individual attendance report as part each pupil's Annual School Report to parents or carers, which is shared in the summer term
- Text messages to parents when a pupil's attendance is between 90-96% to ensure they are aware of this and to support them in getting attendance on track for the expected 96% or more
- Children who present concerns around attendance in school will be discussed at half termly SAFs meetings (School and Family Support), which are also attended by the school nurse to find best ways to support the child and family
- A graduated response will be followed if a child's absence drops over a 6-week period

Types of absence

Parents have legal responsibility under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. If school attendance becomes of concern, this matter will be referred to the Local Authority where a decision will be made as to whether to issue a Penalty Notice or take a prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason. Authorised absences are always approved by the school in advance, before the register is opened at 8.45am/1pm this includes:

- illness;
- medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time
- emergencies; and
- other reasonable or unavoidable causes

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been granted by the Head Teacher. Unauthorised absences can lead to Nottinghamshire County Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- absences which have not been properly explained
- parents or carers keeping children off school without good reason including: shopping, birthdays, day trips or holidays for children of compulsory school age, which have not been agreed by the Head Teacher

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children who arrive after 9.00am are late. Regular lateness reduces children's learning opportunity; the Attendance Officer will follow up persistent lateness.

If a child misses the start of the day, they miss the careful transition into the start of their lessons, miss vital information and news for their day, miss learning time and disrupt the learning of others. Pupils who arrive late can also feel embarrassed, which can, in turn encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill, which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The timings of the school day are consistent for all children in order to enable parents, carers and school staff in the management of lateness.

The agreed school day includes the following key timings:

- 8.35am Staff are on the playground to meet and greet their class. Children should be on site by this time; ***'in the line before 8.45am'***
- 8.45am: the bell rings and children enter class. The morning registers are taken children must be in school on time to be marked "present"
- 9.00am: morning registers are closed. Children arriving after this time are marked "late"
- 11.45am for FSU 12.00pm: end of morning school
- 1.00pm: afternoon registers are marked (12.45pm for FSU); and
- 3.15pm: end of afternoon school

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models for our children and celebrate good class punctuality. Parents and carers can approach school staff at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

Late gate

The Attendance Officer and/or Head Teacher regularly operate late gate. This is an opportunity to encourage parents whose children are showing improvements in attendance, monitor and remind parents whose children's attendance is too low or affected by lateness and also to ensure issues can be discussed in an approachable way and give parents chance to speak to someone about their concerns or issues at the start of the day. Sometimes the Safeguarding governor or School Nurse also join the Attendance officer and/or Head Teacher for late gate.

Absence Procedure

- If your child is too ill to attend school, please call the school office before 8.45am
- The school gates are open from 8.35am and will close at 9.00am
- After this time, your child will be registered through main reception and be marked as late accordingly on the system
- If we do not hear from you, a text will be sent and a phone call will be made
- If we still don't hear from you, we will do a home visit to ensure that your child is safe and well
- If we do not see your child or hear from you, we will follow 'Child missing in Education procedures'

Holidays

At Lovers' Lane, we expect families to take holidays out of term time. We try to help families by planning our INSET days to enable them to take cheaper holidays in the Summer or at some point within the school year where possible – this varies year on year and INSET days are shared in Newsletters and on the school website. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amendment 2016) state that "Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted." Family holidays do not constitute "exceptional circumstances".

School expectation around 'holidays' in term time.

- If you intend to take a holiday in school term time, then you need to complete a holiday form explaining why the holiday is requested
- When a request for a holiday has been received, you will receive a reply in writing of the next actions. There are letters in place for a graded response. Has a school we do fine for unauthorised absences
- If your child is absent and school are unaware of your child's whereabouts (you didn't fill in a holiday form), school has a duty to report to the 'Children Missing in Education' officer at the local authority

Children Missing in Education

We follow Statutory and Local Authority guidance should a child be absent for consecutive days up to 10 days. Should a child be approaching the 10th day of absence where they will be classed a 'Child Missing in Education', then all efforts will be made through phone calls, home visits and contact with the Local Authority Attendance Officer at Nottinghamshire Local Education Authority. All attendance tracking and attempts to locate the child are logged. We will contact the police if we have any safeguarding concerns.

Fines

As a school we really do not want to fine, but if families continue to take multiple holidays along with regular non-attendance during term time, this may include:

- Any more than 3.5 days (7 sessions) of unauthorised absences within a 6-week period
- Taking family holidays during term time
- If your child receives 7 'U' marks within a 6-week period (this includes your child being late to school after 9.15am)
- Please be aware that the amount chargeable is £60 per child, per parent, per week, this includes families that may be separated but still have parental responsibility

Incentives, Drives and Rewards

- Our Attendance officer works extremely hard to reward good attendance. We have a weekly attendance assembly where we watch the PowerPoint, and we celebrate good attendance and raise awareness of our target of 'at least 96%'. Classes achieving this target receive a sticker on the displayed chart. The winning class each term chooses their own class reward
- Badges for 100% attendance are awarded at the end of each term (Autumn is Bronze, Spring is Silver and Summer is Gold medal). Children also receive certificates for 96%, 99% and 100% attendance. Our attendance officer gives 'well done postcards' to children and families who are monitored and showing improvement
- Attendance drives, such as the 'Easter Egg Challenge', 'Ice Lolly Challenge' and 'Christmas Challenge', take place every year
- An Attendance display in the school hall helps children and families to visually track how attendance is going per class and celebrates success. This is also shared via our Facebook page

How does your child's attendance measure up?

The following information shows how school attendance can affect a child's future progress. Any pupil with attendance below 90% is regarded as a persistent absentee.

100%	<i>Excellent attendance leading to the best possible achievement</i>
96%	<i>Less than 8 days absence in a year Good attendance leading to good achievement</i>
90%	<i>19 days absence over the year Pupils are missing almost a month of school per year. They will struggle to keep up in Maths and Literacy.</i>
85%	<i>29 days absence in a year These pupils are missing 6 weeks of school a year (half a term), it will be very difficult for them to keep up.</i>
80%	<i>Pupils with this attendance are missing a day for every week of school. Parents of pupils with this level of attendance could be issued with a Penalty Notice.</i>

At Lovers' Lane a good level of attendance is 96%, as this will give every child the best possible opportunity for good progress and achievement in school. Attendance below 96% will be monitored closely and any attendance below 90% is a cause for possible referral to Family Services.

Safeguarding through attendance monitoring

In addition to its own regular monitoring of attendance data, Lovers' Lane Primary School recognises its legal responsibility to take account of each pupil's attendance from the first day that has been agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. This statement applies whether the child has arrived for their expected first day or not.

Where an unauthorised absence is recorded, the Attendance Officer will bring this to the attention of a Designated Person for Safeguarding. The Designated Person will always consider unauthorised absence and persistent absence with due regard to safeguarding procedures.

The school will inform Nottinghamshire County Council of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Attendance have been taken out of school by their parents or carers and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school
- have a medical condition certified by the School Nurse that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school or have been permanently excluded

Contact information

Contact information is reviewed at the start of each academic year and regularly after that in line with our open-door policy – parents can update information at any time as needed. We expect 3 contacts to be given and should we not be able to make contact with any of these should a child be absent with no explanation, a home visit will be conducted with the Attendance Officer and another member of staff. Should there be no response at the home then a 101 police call will be made to investigate further. Contact information is kept securely on our online data system.

Impact of COVID-19 on attendance

- All guidance from Nottinghamshire Local Authority and DFE at Government level will be followed in managing attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Pupils will have the appropriate codes allocated for quarantine and self-isolation
- School will keep a register of who is absent due to COVID-19 test, quarantine and isolation (in line with data protection expectations) to keep track of when pupils can safely return to school
- Parents need to contact school weekly, by email, telephone or the child attending live lessons, when in government lockdown. If teaching staff have not heard from the family, the Attendance Officer/Safeguarding Lead will contact the family. If no contact can be made a home visit will take place and we will follow children missing in education procedures

Attendance at Lovers' Lane Primary School

- School gates open from 8.35am and will close at 9am
- If your child arrives after 9am, please sign in at the office and this will then be marked late on the register
- If your child arrives after 9.15am a different code will be used. If this happens more than 7 occasions, over a 6-week period a penalty notice could be issued
- If your child is ill, please telephone the office by 8.55am or report an absence by emailing Mrs Watts or class teacher lwatts@loverslane.notts.sch.uk
- If we do not hear from you a text/phone call will be made
- If we still don't hear from you, we will complete a home visit
- If we do not see your child or hear from you within 48-hour period, we may notify other professionals for safeguarding reasons

Holidays

- A holiday form from the office **must** be completed
- We will write back with the outcome next steps
- We will not authorise any holidays during term time, unless it is due to exceptional circumstances,
- You may be issued with a fixed penalty notice if it is for more than 3 days
- Please be aware that both parents/partners will be fined, and it will be per child, per week



Fixed Penalty Notice

- We do issue fixed penalty notices in line with Local Authority guidance for regular non-attendance and for taking holidays during term time, please see below for an outline of what this may include:
- Any more than 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absences within a 6-week period
 - Taking family holidays during term time
 - If your child is late 7 times (after 9.15am) within a 6-week period
 - Please be aware that the amount chargeable is £60 per child, per parent, per week, this includes families that may be separated but still have parental responsibility

Medical Evidence

- We will automatically ask for medical evidence for any absence to be authorised
- We will also ask for medical evidence if your child is off more than 3 days due to illness, this applies to all children

Rewards

- 100% attendance termly awards
- 96% or above certificates
- £5 amazon voucher for 100% for the whole year
- 96% or above end of year celebration
- Highest class attendance termly reward

Positive Relationships and Support

If you feel you need support with regards to your child's attendance, our attendance officer Mrs Watts is happy to help. We have lots of agencies that can support in difficult situations as we all want the best for your child. If your child's attendance drops significantly below 90% and this is unexplained, we can refer you to the Local Authority without parental consent and this will be passed on to the enforcement team, so early communication is vital.