

Langley Primary Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset.

As a school that expects good attendance we recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture.

In building a culture of good school attendance, our school recognises:

- the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils (including use of pupil premium).
- improving attendance is a school leadership issue and has a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- that attendance support and improvement needs to be appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- that we have a responsibility to set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, we will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. This will also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- that we should visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- the issue of children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation

A right to schooling

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may

have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The process of dealing with attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.

All partners will work together to:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, school and its partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include

formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The routines of attendance

To discuss matters to do with attendance please contact either the Head Teacher, Dr James, or the Senior Pastoral Keyworker, Miss Savage, by calling 01215521744.

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities.

- School starts at 8.50am and finishes at 3.15pm. School gates open at 8.30am and KS2 children may be left unaccompanied in the playground from this time. Other children remain the responsibility of parents and carers until they enter the school building. Children may come into school from 8.40am to complete pre-school activities in the classroom.
- Gates close at 8.50 am promptly and children arriving after that time must be signed in at the School Office and will be marked as Late.
- Registers close at 9am and arrival after 9.30am is considered as an Unauthorised Absence.
- Any planned absence from school must be requested by completing a Leave of Absence form, preferably 4 weeks in advance. Where it is an emergency situation the form should be completed as soon as possible. Evidence for the reason given will always be requested.
- Langley Primary does NOT authorise holidays taken in term time.
- Any absence should be reported to the school on the first day of absence by ringing 0121 552 1744. If you cannot get through it is acceptable to email the Head Teacher on tony.james@langleyprimary.com. Parents are expected to call each day of the absence.
- If we are not notified of a child's absence, we will call the home in the morning of that day (first day calling).
- After 3 days of any absence the school will contact the family and ask for medical evidence of the absence. This can be, for example, an appointment card for a doctor, or evidence of purchase of off the shelf medicines that relate to the illness.
- If there is no contact with the school for 4 days, the school will carry out a home visit. If this raises sufficient concern a referral made be made to Attendance and Prosecutions for a Welfare Check or even a referral related to a safeguarding concern to the Children's Trust.

Rewards for Good attendance

The school wants to reward and celebrate good attendance. The school target for attendance is 96.7%.

To celebrate good attendance, we have a weekly assembly, where the best attending class and the class with the fewest lates are rewarded. For the best attending class across a half term they are given a special VIP afternoon treat. There is also a whole school celebration if the school target is met. Other incentives and rewards may be offered at times also.

No child is punished for their attendance. Poor attendance is the responsibility of the parents or carers.

Routines for tracking and dealing with unacceptably low attendance.

- Attendance of all pupils is regularly checked for both patterns of absence (for example, several Mondays off school) and for the overall number of days absent from school.
- If an issue is seen the aim is to work with the family involved to attempt to remove any barriers to the child not attending school. This will usually involve a face to face meeting or a telephone call to discuss the reasons for the absences and to find solutions.
- If attendance is below 90% (one day of absence every 2 weeks) the child is considered to be persistently absent. At this stage the parent or carer will be sent a letter informing them of this and that the attendance is being monitored.
- If attendance is not improved within 2 weeks a meeting will be arranged to discuss the reasons for the continued absences and any barriers there may be. Support may be offered at this point.
- If no further improvement is seen, then a further meeting will be arranged and an Attendance Contract drawn up and agreed between the family and the school. This will set clear targets. In the case of persistent absence this will be that if more than 10 sessions are missed (10 half days) within the next 5 weeks of school, a referral will be made to Attendance and Prosecutions. At this point it is at their discretion what action is taken, including a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If, at any point, there are 10 days of unexplained absence a referral will be made to Attendance and Prosecutions with a request for a Welfare Check. This is in addition to our earlier attempted home visit on day 4.

Monitoring of patterns of attendance at school level.

- The school considers several groupings of children within school for the purposes of looking at overall attendance trends. This will at least include groups that are nationally cause for concern, including Pupil Premium pupils, Looked After Children, SEND pupils and boys. This is because these groups are nationally showing lower attendance. The school may look at other groups as well because of the local context.
- Full review will happen termly, with a report to the Governing Body at the next available meeting.
- Where a grouping raises concern a review will be done half termly until an improvement is seen. This review will include looking at possible barriers to attendance and finding solutions. This will include senior staff.
- The outcome of such reviews will be fed back to the class teachers. It will then be part of their responsibility to implement these actions and increase their effort to gain improved attendance.

Retaining and amending registers

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance. To do this we use an electronic management information system to keep their attendance and admission registers to improve accuracy, speed up the process of sharing and analysing information, and make returns to local authorities and DfE easier.

Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry.

Where amendments are made, we will ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.

Leaves of absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. As a general rule a request for taking a holiday in term time or an event that could be celebrated outside of term time will be refused.

We will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the head teacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. In all but exceptional circumstances this will be no more than 5 days.

The school does NOT authorise holidays taken in term time and if taken will make a recommendation to Attendance and Prosecutions that they issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Pupils with medical conditions and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed, considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, we will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.

*Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary

Part time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

Any part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, we have agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised.

Sharing information

All schools should work with the local communities (including voluntary and community groups) to help remove the barriers to attendance that families experience. In some cases, families will experience the same or similar barriers to attendance for multiple children who attend different schools in the area. As such, it is of mutual benefit for such schools to work together where possible. This will be particularly beneficial in supporting transition between feeder schools.

Schools of all types, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms). Local authorities and schools (of all types) are expected to have a regular Targeting Support Meetings at least termly.

Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- Every time a pupil's name is to be added to, or deleted from, the school admission register outside of standard transition times (including the statutory reason for deletion). For deletions this must take place before the deletion, and for additions it must be no later than 5 working days after the addition.
- The name and address of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised. Local authorities should agree the frequency this must be shared with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.

The Duty of Governors

The Governors have a duty to

- Name a specific Governor responsible for the monitoring and smooth running of this policy.
- Expect analysis of the school's attendance and provide the opportunity for the relevant Sub-Committee to analyse and challenge these results. This should be clearly visible in the minutes of such meetings.

- Expect attendance and persistent absence figures to be at least comparable to similar schools.
- Hold the leadership of the school accountable for attendance and the level achieved, including targets for improvement.
- Ensure adequate training for responsible staff.
- Provide a simplified version of this policy and the expectations and process contained within it for families.