



THE LIMES

PRIMARY ACADEMY

"Growing Learners for Life"

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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Collaboration Curiosity Responsibility Resourcefulness Resilience Reflectiveness



Introduction

At The Limes Primary Academy we are committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We do all we can to encourage children to attend school. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school therefore we strive to make school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. They should:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, i.e. 8.50am, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to attend school regularly
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Parents should notify the school by telephone by 9.10 a.m. on the first day and all subsequent days of their child's absence. Parents should provide an explanation for the absence by stating the exact reason for the absence. Using the term 'unwell' is not a sufficient explanation for an absence. The absence can be reported by on the school telephone number XXXXXXXXXX. If the school has not been notified of the absence by 9.30am then a text or phone call requesting an explanation will be made. The explanation for absence should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns to school.
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours

Responsibilities - Academy

The academy is responsible for:

- Working with parents to help their child develop an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Working in partnership with parents to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Employing a range of strategies to encourage good attendance
- Discussing with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer any concerns it may have about the attendance and/or punctuality of any child on the school roll.
- Keeping accurate attendance records for a minimum of three years.

Schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.

For pupils of compulsory school age, schools are required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Therefore, at The Limes, we:

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- are sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. We recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. We also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school.
- Produce school attendance policies which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff

The Headteacher, Mrs Kate Cracknell, is the senior person with overall responsibility for attendance at The Limes.

Attendance Registers

At The Limes we use an unambiguous electronic registration system within our MIS system. The DfE entry codes are included in Appendix 1, these include the various absence codes which can be entered.

- Registers will be taken at 8.50am each morning. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as being late.
- Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is the legal document.
- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted to request an improvement in punctuality.
- The school will follow up persistent lateness, all absences and pupils with low levels of attendance.
- The school will monitor attendance on a daily/weekly basis.
- Parents/carers who have not provided a reason for their child's absence by the end of the week will be contacted.
- Each half-term, registers will be monitored and parents/carers of pupils with less than 90% attendance may be notified.
- Pupils with less than 90% attendance may be discussed with the Attendance team at Suffolk County Council and appropriate action identified and agreed.

Absence

Authorised Absence

Only the academy can authorise absence. Parents do not have this authority. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the academy does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be authorised by the school. An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence should be treated as unauthorised. Legitimate reasons for a child to be absent from school, and which will be authorised by the school, include:

- the child's illness
- the child is attending a medical/dental appointment
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent(s) belongs
- a close family bereavement

- the child is attending an off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition, e.g. speech therapy
- the child is attending an **exceptional** special occasion (the school will judge whether the occasion is exceptional) and leave of absence has been granted by the school
- leave of absence has been granted by the school

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, an absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without what the school considers to be a good reason, even if the parent supports the absence. Reasons for absence being unauthorised include:

- no explanation has been received by the school
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the child is more than 10 minutes late for school and does not have a satisfactory explanation for the lateness (the school will judge whether the explanation is satisfactory)
- the child is absent due to an unexceptional special occasion, e.g. a birthday, collecting friends/relatives from an airport or having a day out with friends/relatives who are visiting the UK
- the child's parent or sibling is unwell
- the child is on a holiday that has not been authorised by the school

Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term time

Holidays Changes to legislation in 2013 made it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

Parents who wish to request exceptional leave of absence should do so on the 'Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence' form (see Appendix 2) which is available on the academy website as well as from the school office.

To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, **does not** constitute an exceptional circumstance.

All requests for leave during term time should be made in writing and addressed to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider the request, and respond in writing, either refusing or granting authorised leave.

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

If a child is off for 5 or more days due to illness, then medical evidence must be provided. Without evidence the absence will be unauthorised.

A parent/carer should phone the school to inform the school office on the first day of absence for illness. A note should be supplied upon return. If no note is received, one reminder will be sent. If no note is forthcoming within a week following the reminder, the absence is likely to be categorised as unauthorised.

All letters explaining absence should be passed to the office. These will be entered onto the system. In the event of no reason for absence being given or received on the first day of absence, a telephone call will be made to the family. If this should be unsuccessful, it will be followed by a letter.

Advance notice of medical/dental appointments should be given wherever possible, preferably in writing. Students leaving/returning to the premises in session time must report to the school office where such movements are recorded for safety reasons. Where possible medical appointments should be made out of school time.

Fixed Penalty Notices

If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence (including irregular attendance and/or term-time holidays) in the current and/or previous term, including holidays where permission has been denied, the Headteacher can apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child. If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority.

The Local Authority retains the revenue from penalties in order to finance the scheme and any subsequent prosecutions.

The academy may ask parents to provide medical confirmation (from a GP or other medical professional) of their child's absence from school if they are at risk of having legal action taken against them for their child's non-attendance. Parents will be responsible for any costs incurred.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued as a last resort when the school feels it has exhausted all other strategies to assist the child to attend school regularly.

Recognition of Good Attendance

- Attendance data is published, class by class, in the school newsletter.
- At the end of the school year certificates are presented to children with 100% attendance and to children whose attendance or punctuality shows a marked improvement during the course of the year.
- At the end of each term, certificates are presented to children with 100% attendance for that term.

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances



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Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken during term time adversely affect your child's learning.

I/We request exceptional leave of absence from the academy for:

Child's name	Child's class

For the dates _____ to _____ (inclusive)

For the following reason/s (please give as much detail as possible and/or attach supporting evidence):

Your name/s (print): _____

Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

ACADEMY USE ONLY

Request received on: _____ Authorised: Not Authorised:

Reason:

Signature: _____ (Headteacher) Date: _____