

Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy

Audience:	Parents REAch2 Staff Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards Trustees
Ratified:	REAch2 Trust Board October 2022
Other related policies:	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Complaints Procedures Policy Behavioural Policy Children Missing Education Policy Home Visit Policy Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Policy owner:	Gill Ellyard, Director of Education
Review:	Every 3 years

At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.



Leadership

Finding the leader in all of us.



Inclusion

Realising the greatness in our difference.



Learning

Creating exceptional opportunities for learning.



Enjoyment

Loving what we do.



Inspiration

Feeling the power of the possible.



Integrity

Being courageously true to our purpose.



Responsibility

Unwavering commitment to seeing things through.

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Policy Overview

The Limes Primary Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance and punctuality is essential. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school, on time.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance and punctuality behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.
- Rewarding regular attendance and good punctuality.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE current version of Keeping Children Safe In Education
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behavioural Policy

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy: **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency for which the school has granted leave

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- Absence due to an illness or medical appointment where a child's attendance is under 90% and the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In this situation the school may request medical evidence to support the absence.

Six or more unauthorised absences can lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice Referral being made to Suffolk County Council.

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Lateness

- Arrival at school after the beginning of the school day but before the register has closed

[Policy In Detail](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance and punctuality expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every child has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring children do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance and punctuality behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual children to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The *Admin officer* – is responsible for informing the LA of any child being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Children are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance and punctuality of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children.

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance and/or punctuality. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk children as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school, or poor punctuality, could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Child expectations

Children are expected to attend school every day and need to be ready for school, helping parents/carers to ensure that they arrive at school punctually.

Children at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to children at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having face to face meetings with parents
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a child at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the child in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a child becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome children back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with children and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.

Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children with a social worker
- LAC
- Children who are eligible for FSM
- Children with EAL
- Children with SEND

Children Missing in Education (CME)

We understand the risks posed to children who are not receiving a full-time education, both in terms of their safety and their academic achievement. We are aware of both DfE guidance (Children missing education – Statutory guidance for local authorities, [2016]) and our Local Authority procedures concerning Children Missing in Education. We will work in full accordance with these expectations, including working jointly with the Local Authority to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child who has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or following twenty consecutive days of unauthorised absence. We will share information from our admissions and attendance registers as requested with the Local Authority, and with other schools when a child transitions to or from our school, to support with effective implementation of the authority's policies relating to these statutory duties. In the event of any safeguarding concern regarding a child who is missing in education, we will follow our safeguarding policy.

Children with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some children face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include children who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Staff at the school will work with the parents and be mindful of the barriers these children face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education whilst maintaining the same, high expectations regarding their attendance.

Part-time timetables

All children at our school are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a child's best interest, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a child from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Any part-time timetable will have a time limit by which point the child will be expected to attend full-time, either at school or an alternative provision. This will be kept under regular review with the child and their parents.

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.

A telephone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If there is no answer to the telephone call we will try the all other contact numbers given and then follow up with a text message. We will also record the absence on CPOMs. If the child is still absent with no contact on the second day, this will be recorded on CPOM's and a home visit may be deemed necessary.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the *pastoral team and/or EWO*.

If a child's attendance drops below 95.5% – 96.9%, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the child's parent.

Where a child has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the child from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries. (*CME statutory guidance pg 8, para 18*).

Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with children and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, punctuality and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with children and their families to support attendance and punctuality, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance / punctuality or require support.

Attendance register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether children are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence (for other reasons)

- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Child not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant children who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years from the date of the last entry.

Pastoral support

If they are persistently absent, children will be referred to the school pastoral team who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

Attendance emails will be sent out at the end of each half term to any child whose attendance has fallen below 95.9% to make parents aware. If a child’s attendance has fallen below 90% parents will receive an email advising them of this. Six or more unauthorised absences may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being made to Suffolk County Council.

Emails will also be sent to parents to inform if their child’s attendance has improved.

The *school attendance officer* will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of children and to implement attendance procedures.

Where a child’s absence is 50% or below, the Headteacher will report this to the relevant staff members in school (e.g. DSL) and the Deputy Director of Education (DDoE), providing them with a detailed report of the issues relating to the poor attendance and the school’s actions to address this. The DDoE may decide to refer to this the Safeguarding lead for further advice and support.

Length of School Day

- Schools are expected to publish their school hours on their website
- Schools are expected to be teaching a minimum of 32.5 hours each week at the latest from September 2023 and should be actively working towards this during 2022–23.

- The 32.5 hours includes all the time that all pupils are expected to be in school from the point at which the register is taken to the end of the school day. This includes break times, lunch times assemblies and so on. However, it does not include optional before or after school clubs.
- For schools that operate a 'soft start' at the beginning of the day, this time does NOT count towards the 32.5 hours. The school day begins at the time at which the register is taken and all pupils are expected to be in school.

Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day starts at 8.45am. Children should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by 8.55am. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 9am. Children will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, registers are marked by 1pm. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 1pm. Children will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Children attending after 8.45am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a child can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a child's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a child's authorised absence record is already above *10 percent* for any reason

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they will be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of children and understand the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

All children are expected to be in their classes by 8.45am and 1pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any child with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the child, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

Leaving the school without permission

Children will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. Please refer to REAch2 Missing Pupil Policy.

Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, parents should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

If the appointment requires the child to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Children will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

The school will ensure that all children engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for children engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the child.

The child will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the child would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a child receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the child would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a child's attendance would fall below 97%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Young carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each child will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for children who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

Rewarding good attendance and punctuality

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and/or punctuality in the following ways:

- Children will receive a certificate each half term if they have achieved 100% of attendance.

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways

- Celebration assembly
- Additional playtime on the equipment
- Half termly tea party

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that children with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Attendance Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 97% – full details of the school's absence levels can be found *on the school website*.

The Limes Primary Academy has adopted the following attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures, to ensure that children' attendance and punctuality meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where children' attendance and/or punctuality falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent by the Trust to the SLT and attendance officer detailing weekly and annual (cumulative) attendance and punctuality to date.
2. Attendance and punctuality is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any child absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the child is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any children marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The attendance and Persistent Absence (P.A) of all children will be RAG'd (Purple, Green, Yellow, Amber, Red).

Purple	Green	Yellow	Amber	Red
Attendance at or above 97% PA 8% or below	Attendance between 95.5 – 96.9% PA 8.1% – 10%	Attendance between 94 – 95.4% PA 10.1% –12%	Attendance between 92.5% – 93.9% PA 12.1% – 14%	Attendance 92.4% or below PA 15% or above

Lilac – Attendance at or above 97% and/or PA at 8% or below

Attendance is above the national Primary average and persistent absence is below the national average.

Green – Attendance 95.5% – 96.9% and/or PA at 8.1% – 10%

Attendance is broadly in line with or above the national average. A child's attendance needs further improvement in order to maximise their learning.

If a child's attendance falls within the 95.5% – 96.9% band, the attendance officer will speak to the child in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The attendance officer will also make a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary. A letter will also be sent home stating the number of minutes of lost learning and raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter will also have an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.

Yellow – Attendance 94% – 95.4% and/or PA at 10.1% – 12%

Attendance is below national average. A child's attendance needs further improvement to avoid becoming disadvantaged in their learning.

If a child's attendance falls within the 94% – 95.4% band, a letter is sent home explaining that the child's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer will contact the parents to discuss this. The child's attendance will be monitored for *four weeks* and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. At this meeting, the barriers to the child attending school should be discussed and ways in which both parents and the school can work together to overcome such barriers. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.

After the *four-week* monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the child and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to *within 95.5% – 96.9% (green band) and/or PA is less than 10%*

Amber – Attendance 92.5% – 93.9% and/or PA at 12.1% – 14%

Attendance is well below the national average and is causing concern. It is highly likely that a child is disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided. The school will work in tandem with the local authority and any other relevant partners. A meeting will be held with parents to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the child (if old enough) and family and the potential need for legal intervention in the future. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid these consequences.

The attendance officer should maintain constant contact with the child and parents and celebrate any improvements made in the child's attendance.

Red – Attendance 92.4% or below and/or PA 15% or above

A child's attendance is persistently and significantly below average and is significantly disadvantaged as a result of poor attendance.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the child, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, all parties should work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

Policy Review

The Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** or sooner, taking into account any legislative changes and the latest guidance issued by the DfE.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.