

Attendance Policy



The Livingstone Road Primary Federation adopts the principles and procedures of this Policy for both Schools

Review Cycle: Annual

Last Reviewed: 20th May 2021

Responsible for Review: EHT

Next Review Date: April 2022

Policy Statement

Regular school attendance is important because children not only miss their formal education but also social and emotional interactions with both other children and adults. Punctuality and good attendance are crucial to the success of our pupils, they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and be able to 'Learn Laugh Dream Grow' and achieve the highest possible educational outcomes.

Our Federation recognises that poor attendance can also be a symptom of wider safeguarding issues, low aspirations, generational trend, economic climate and health/medical needs and therefore places additional importance on supporting children to attend school.

The aim of this policy is to maximise school attendance rates, set out the processes in place to support individual children and families and to help all stakeholders understand what acceptable and unacceptable absences are.

Our Federation expects to see 96% attendance or above for all our children, which is also the national standard for good attendance set by the DfE. The 96% attendance benchmark, takes into account that children do get ill and need some time at home, and equates to approximately 9 days absence across an academic year.

The whole school community – pupils, parents/carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.

This policy clarifies everyone's roles, responsibilities, and the steps that our Federation will take to support all children and their families if a child is not regularly attending school.

This policy is underpinned by current Government and BCP Council guidance and follows statutory regulations.



All Staff Responsibilities Everyone within our Federation work together to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the Federation community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff have a responsibility to lead by example, maintaining good attendance and punctuality themselves.

Our Attendance Team Responsibilities The team includes Mrs Hayward, Executive Headteacher, Miss Marshallsay, Teaching Assistant and Mrs Clark, Office Administrator/Attendance Lead. The purpose of this team is to oversee, direct and co-ordinate the Federation's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and to ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the Federation. The team will monitor all children's attendance to ensure that any issues are identified at an early stage and support put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with the parent/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with 'parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child'). As part of our Home-School Agreement, parents/carers commit to supporting their child to attend school, and as a Federation we commit to supporting and encouraging attendance.

Our Federation expects parent/carers to:

- ensure their child attends school every day, on time, whilst striving for 100% attendance;
- not expect the Federation to agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school;
- notify The Federation on the first day of absence by phone, and if requested follow up by a letter/email/appointment letter explaining reason for absence on the first day of return;
- work in partnership with the Federation, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities;
- contact the Federation without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life.

Pupils' Responsibilities All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or another member of school staff. Pupils also have a responsibility to follow Federation procedures if they arrive late.

Governors' Responsibilities The governing body will play an appropriate role in challenging and supporting the Federation in promoting attendance in line with National Average expectations. Attendance will be included in Governor Agendas and as part of Governor monitoring.

Registration Both schools are required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the electronic system and prescribed codes. The registers will be taken promptly at 8.55am and 1.00pm. A mark will be made in respect of each child at these times. Children who arrive after registers have been taken will be marked as a late arrival with the code L, authorised late. Registers close at 9.00, and children arriving after this time will be marked with the code U, unauthorised late.

Categorising Absence Parent/carers should notify the Federation via telephone on the first day of absence (before 9.00am). If no contact is made, the office staff will telephone the child's main carer to establish the reason for absence. In some cases, other emergency contacts listed on the child's record may be contacted. If an explanation is not received, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, the absence will not be authorised. For 'unexplained absence', once the child returns to school, the office will try to establish with the parent/carers the reason for the absence.

Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/ correction is distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Executive Headteacher.

The Federation recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, office staff will challenge parents/carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

Some children are considered as vulnerable because they, or their family, receive support from external agencies. For these children, if they are absent and a reason has not been provided or a parent/carers cannot be contacted, a Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide if it is appropriate to notify the relevant external agency of the absence.

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a) where leave has been granted by the Federation in advance, for example –a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- b) where the Federation is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- c) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- e) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- f) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- g) in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent/carers;
- the Federation is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;

- the pupil is remaining at home because the parent/carer is unable to get them into school;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent because another sibling is unwell;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from Federation on a family holiday (without prior permission);
- the pupil is staying at home to provide care for a parent, sibling or other relative;

Staff Training The Office Staff ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

Collection and Analysis of Data The Attendance Lead and the Executive Headteacher will ensure that attendance data is complete and accurate. Data is reported daily, weekly and half-termly and is analysed by the Attendance Team. The Executive Headteacher also ensures that attendance data is reported to parents and Governors and that attendance targets are regularly reminded. Attendance forms part of the weekly communication to parent letter sent by the Executive Headteacher.

Monitoring Attendance The Attendance Lead will update at the end of each week our persistent absence (PA tracker – children with attendance less than 90%) and at the end of each half term a tracker to show whose attendance has dropped below 95%. They will also look at reasons for absence and add these to the tracker. The Attendance Team meet each Friday to review the updated trackers and decide what actions to take.

On a daily basis, a member of staff works with small groups of children to support their regular attendance at school. The families of any child considered as PA and who is not in school on a particular day, may receive a telephone call from a member of the attendance team to discuss the reason for absent and to support the child's return to school.

School Strategies to Tackle Absence Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence the Federation will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for the absences. Support will be put in place to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. If attendance does not improve the parent/carer will be contacted again to advise that future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them (e.g. medical evidence).

BCP Council 5-19s Team If there is no improvement in the child's attendance at school over the next few weeks, or if the child is failing to attend school at all, the matter will be referred to the BCP Council 5-19s Team.

Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more. Schools must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences.

Lateness and Punctuality Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who

arrive after the register officially closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late.

A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. After 9.00am, parents/carers will need to bring their child to the school office. For the same reason it is important that if a child is leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, parents/carers need to report to the school office.

Celebrating Good Attendance Children who have 96% attendance or above are celebrated every half term in Celebration Assembly with a certificate to take home. Children who have maintained 100% attendance throughout the school year will be awarded a certificate at the end of every term, then will have an extra special treat at the end of the academic year.

Term Time Holidays The Federation's policy is that anyone found to have taken an unauthorised term time holiday will be liable to be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. We greatly value the positive relationship between home and school and we do not want the issue of holidays to create a conflict in this relationship. It is important for parents/carers to note that once the Federation has requested that BCP Council issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a period of unauthorised leave in term time, you will not have an opportunity to discuss this matter further with BCP. Any queries or discussions should be had prior to, or at the time of requesting the leave.

Extended Leave of Absence Any extended leave of absence is at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher. The absence will be unauthorised unless exceptional reasons are given. If an extended leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation, a pupil could be removed from the school roll.