



LYNCH HILL SCHOOL PRIMARY ACADEMY

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE, REGISTRATION, SICKNESS AND TRUANCY

At Lynch Hill, we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time.

Lynch Hill School is committed to improving attendance in its schools. Children who attend regularly are more likely to:

- learn more
- meet friends
- achieve good results
- have a better chance of getting a good job
- confidence and high self-esteem

Poor attendance can result in:

- poor levels of achievement
- experiencing difficulty in their learning
- lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- inconsistent relationships with peers and staff causing feelings of isolation
- potential safeguarding concerns

Even one day missed from school without very good reason is one too many.

Children who are absent for substantial parts of their education fall behind and struggle to catch up. By lowering the threshold, we are encouraging schools to crack down on absence before the problem escalates.

*Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, **leaving them at a considerable disadvantage to their peers**. There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement*

DFE 2010 - 2015

Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the School handbook. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason. Attendance records are provided for each pupil within their annual school report in July each year. Attendance and other reports are passed on to receiving schools.

We place great emphasis on attendance, as it is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of a child's learning experiences. We believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. Positive reinforcements are used as an incentive for children to attend regularly, and we actively encourage their parents to feel positive about the school.

Our attendance register records the following particulars:

- In the case of every pupil whose name is entered and not deleted from the admission register, whether the pupil is:
 - Present.
 - Absent.
 - Attending an approved educational activity.
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

- In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent, a statement as to whether or not the absence is authorised.
- In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is attending an approved educational activity, the nature of that activity.
- In the case of any pupil unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances, the nature of those circumstances.

For all absences, the school will consider whether any safeguarding action is required or they may seek advice.

Monitoring attendance also allows the school to track vulnerable families, to ensure all children are regularly attending school and ensure we are fulfilling our safeguarding role.

Children should never be absent from school without a good reason. A note, a telephone call or an e-mail from the parent should cover all absences. In most cases absences will then be authorised.

Research shows that there is a direct link between good attendance and achievement in school. Poor attendance can have a direct effect on a pupil's attainment and their future life chances.

For example, 90% attendance might sound quite acceptable, but what that means in reality is:

- on average half a day's school missed every week. (Would an employer think this is an acceptable rate of attendance?)
- this would also mean in one year 4 whole weeks of schooling missed.
- in 5 years it would mean half of a school year missed.
- it could result in a drop in attainment in each subject.

Habits of low attendance and lateness in school are often repeated in working life.

Categories of Attendance

Attendance is reviewed regularly and pupils fall into one of the categories below:

- 100% - Outstanding attendance
- 95% - Good attendance
- 91-94% - Cause for concern
- 90% or below – classed as persistent absentees

Outstanding and Good Attendance is always rewarded at Lynch Hill.

Above 97%: Less than six days absence a year. Excellent attendance: these pupils will almost certainly get the best levels they can, leading to better prospects in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year. These pupils are likely to achieve good levels of attainment and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a two-week holiday can only achieve 95% attendance.

90%: 19 days absence a year. These pupils will miss a month of school per year; it will be difficult to achieve their best. Parents may face the possibility of legal action being taken by the local authority.

85%: 29 days absence a year. These pupils in this group are missing six weeks school per year. It will be very difficult for them to keep up with the work and they will be unlikely to achieve good levels of attainment. Parents can often face the possibility of legal action being taken by the local authority.

80%: 38 days absence a year. The Government class these pupils as 'persistent absentees'. It will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents are likely to face the possibility of legal action being taken by the local authority.

- The register distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absences. Authorised absences are genuine reasons of medical or home circumstances. We always ask for proof of appointments with GPs, dentist, hospital or any other appointment. However, an absence cannot be authorised for shopping trips, days out or visiting family, and the like: activities that clearly should be arranged at weekends or during holidays. It is also unacceptable for a whole day's absence to be taken for a routine appointment, e.g. the dentist. The majority of children are able to return to school after the appointment.

- Children should never be absent from school without a good reason. A note, a telephone call or an e-mail from the parent should cover all absences. Most acceptable absences can then be authorised. Absences due to the illness of a parent or for trips taken on a school day, for example, are unacceptable reasons and cannot be authorised. The Department for Education (DfE) classifies an unauthorised absence as truancy.
- Lynch Hill regularly reports to parents during the school year on their child's rate of attendance. We aim to achieve a whole school attendance rate in line with the national average, which currently stands at 95%. Attendance below 95% is unacceptable and we work closely with the Attendance Officer in monitoring such situations. Our annual attendance figures are monitored and published by the DfE and OFSTED

Persistently Absent (PA) Pupils

Pupils who are identified by the government as Persistently Absent (PA) are monitored by the government. We also monitor pupils whose absence is on track to become a PA.

This means pupils who miss:

- 7 sessions or more by October
- 14 sessions or more by Christmas
- 20 sessions or more by February half-term
- 30 sessions or more by Easter
- 38 sessions or more by Summer half-term

These pupils will be monitored by senior staff, and parents will be expected to work closely to identify the issues and to support regular attendance.

Parents/carers of children who have 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised attendance may be subject to legal action by the local authority. This may include Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), which can lead to a fine or court action.

It is important to discuss any issues at the earliest opportunity

Term-Time Leave:

Taking a child out of school for one week (5 days) will reduce attendance to 97.5% before any account is taken of days off for illness or other circumstances.

Children who are taken out of school during term-time may never catch up on work missed. This can affect test results and is particularly harmful if the absence occurs in a SATs year.

The law states that parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time.

At Lynch Hill we believe that children should be in school and therefore do not authorise any leave of absence requests. However, we may consider authorising part of a request if the circumstance is exceptional and justifies the absence. Examples of events that are not considered exceptional are family holidays, weddings, extended religious holidays and generally any event that does not justify a child being out of school. If a pupil's attendance is below 95%, no absence will be authorised.

If the school refuses a request for term-time leave, and the student is still taken out of school, this is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Five full days of unauthorised absences in a school year will result in legal action being taken.

A request for leave of absence during term time will always trigger some form of investigation from the school because it may indicate a safeguarding concern.

Religious Holidays

All requests for religious holiday should be put in writing on the school's leave of absence form. The school will only authorise 1 day of absence for genuine and appropriate religious ceremonies.

The school must ensure that religious requests of leave are genuine and reasonable. This may lead to further exploration of an event or request; potentially involving other agencies to ensure the safety of the pupils.

Children missing in education

If a child is withdrawn or missing for 5 days from Lynch Hill, the school will immediately notify the Local Authority, and potentially Social Care.

Home schooled children

If the parent has made the decision to withdraw the child to educate them at home, the school will immediately notify the Local Authority and possibly Social Care.

Absence due to long term sickness

At Lynch Hill we work hard to ensure that children who are absent from school due to medical reasons receive as much educational support as possible. We will liaise with other teaching facilities such as the teaching unit at Wexham Hospital and parents, sending work as appropriate.

Medical Absence

As a school, we have to satisfy ourselves that absences are genuine. We would not, however, expect any parent to send their child to school if they are genuinely ill.

Long-term or recurring medical absence needs to be supported by a Doctor's note. In specific cases, the school will not authorise medical absence unless supported by medical evidence.

Guidance for absence due to sickness:

- Sickness and diarrhoea – we recommend that whilst a child is experiencing sickness or diarrhoea they are kept off school. Generally, a virus needs 24 hours after the last episode to ensure that the child is no longer infectious. However, we leave this decision to the parent to decide if the child is well enough to come back to school sooner than this.
- Coughs and colds do not normally require the child to be absent from school, but this depends on the severity of the illness.
- Conjunctivitis – Once the child is receiving treatment, they should be in school no exclusion period is necessary.
- Chicken pox – usually this takes about five days from the onset of the rash. Once the spots are dried and scabbed over, then the child can return to school.
- If a child is unwell at school, we may contact the parent to take the child home if we feel that this is necessary.
- If staff consider that the child needs immediate medical attention, then we will contact the emergency services and the parent.

**Absence from school due to illness must be reported
each day to school office before 9am
Tel no: 01753 524170**

Lateness

The issue of poor punctuality must be taken very seriously and strongly discouraged. DfE guidance clearly states that schools should actively discourage late arrival and provide a policy on the matter.

When a pupil arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson/school day. This reduces their chances of academic success. Poor punctuality can also cause social disruption as children and young people may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed arriving to the classroom when everyone else is already settled. In fact, when one pupil arrives late it disrupts the teacher and the rest of the class, compromising everyone's learning.

Good attendance and punctuality are essential for all pupils if they are to achieve their full potential, both academically and socially.

Pupils arriving late, after 8:50am and before the register closes at 9am)are marked as late (L).

Pupils arriving late after the registers closes at 9am are marked as unauthorised absence (U), when there is no valid reason to mark it otherwise.

Late Detentions

Children in Key Stage 2 are required to make up their lateness on a Friday after school; for example if a child is 15 minutes late on Tuesday, they are required to stay for 15 minutes after school on Friday. Texts are sent home to parents on the Friday to let them know how much time their child needs to make up.

Penalties

The Inclusion Officer monitors lateness closely; more than 3 episodes of lateness in a term will result in a phone call or letter home. If there is no improvement, a meeting with the parent or carer will take place. Persistent patterns of late arrival can provide grounds for prosecution. Fixed penalty notices will be issued if the parent or carer fails to improve punctuality.

Graduated response to attendance

At Lynch Hill we have a graduated response to dealing with attendance. In the first instance, a text message will be sent asking for a reason for the absence. If your child's attendance falls below 95%, they will become a Cause for Concern. This means:

1. Your child's attendance will be monitored weekly by the Attendance officer. You will be notified of our concerns.
2. You will be invited into school to discuss the attendance issues.
4. After a period of time you will be invited to a review meeting
5. There will be legal action if there is no improvement.

It is important that we work together to achieve good attendance. Any issues which impact on attending school should be discussed at the earliest opportunity with the Family Support Advisor, your child's class teacher, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the school's Attendance officer.

Attendance Officers

Our Attendance officers monitor the registers every week. Senior teaching staff also support the team with attendance matters.

Inclusion and safeguarding Officer

The Inclusion Officer is available to work in partnership with families to help the family ensure their child is as successful as possible. Mrs Bunce can be contacted through the school office.

What Lynch Hill is doing to support attendance.

We understand how important attendance is and encourage a positive ethos regarding attendance for all pupils. There is a strong pastoral system for supporting and monitoring attendance; this includes the Inclusions officer, team leaders, subject teachers, and the school's Inclusion Team, which includes therapists, an educational psychologist, nurture practitioners and behaviour support.

Following a pupil's absence, we will support every individual in catching up on any missed work. Should a student have a long-term or recurring illness, work will be sent home via the school office.

Every term, pupils will have their attendance and behaviour celebrated through an Attendance and behaviour reward.

If the child is unsuccessful in gaining the reward, but the parent feels that they had a genuine reason for being absent, the parent can contact the Attendance Officer to review the situation.

The School Day and Registration

- The doors open at 8.35am and children may enter at that time. Children are expected to be in class, or in assembly by 8.50am.
- Punctuality is monitored and persistent lateness is followed up.
- Lessons finish at 3.00pm. Staff may retain the class for up to 10 minutes if there is a need to address an important issue of the day. Children leave school by 3.10pm. Children not collected by 3.10pm will be taken to the Year 2 block and a charge could be applied. In the case of unexpected circumstances which may cause you to be late to collect your child/ren, please notify the school office immediately.

- Children should arrive punctually, as lateness can be upsetting for children, disruptive for the class and a bad habit to acquire for later life. However, children should not arrive too early before the school day. The School does not accept responsibility for their welfare before 8.35am (unless attending Breakfast Club) and after 3.15pm (unless registered to attend a club after school).
- The register is taken by the Class teacher in the classroom between 8:40 and 8:50am. The register is sent to the office by 9am. Children who arrive after 08:50am need to report to the office and sign in the "Late Book".
- Any lateness after 9am means 'late after the close of registration' and these counts as an absence for the session.
- The last day of each half-term school finishes **at 1.30pm** for all pupils.

Truancy

- All staff at Lynch Hill are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting, then action is taken straight away.
- If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, who will then contact the parent, and the Attendance Officer. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of a child leaving the school premises after arriving at school, and the school being unable to contact a parent/guardian, then the Police will be notified.
- Truancy is a serious issue, which the school aims to address in a supportive manner.
- The school also aims to address the issue of "condoned truancy" in which parents support a young child's non-attendance at school by offering excuses covered by a written note. Positive reinforcements are used as an incentive for children to attend school and we actively encourage their parents to feel positive about the school.
- Any reason for absence, which is unacceptable and cannot be authorised, is discussed with the parents.

School contact number: 01753 524170

Information you will need to have to hand

- Pupil's Name
- Pupil's class teacher
- Reasons for absence
- Have you made a doctor's appointment?
- Likely date of return to school