



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:

- getting left behind
- experiencing difficulty in their learning
- lack of confidence and low self-esteem

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.

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.

Monitoring attendance also allows the school to track vulnerable families, ensuring children are protected and we are fulfilling our safeguarding role.

Children should never be absent from school without a good reason. All absences should be covered by a note, a telephone call or an e-mail from the parent. Most absences can 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 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 grades 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. Pupils will miss a month of school per year; it will be difficult to achieve their best.

85%: 29 days absence a year. Pupils in this group are missing six weeks school per year. It will be very difficult for them to keep up with the work so to achieve their best.

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 can often 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. Further clarification or proof will be required if the absence is longer than a few days. 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. All absences should be covered by a note, a telephone call or an e-mail from the parent. Most 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

Two Major Issues Affecting Attendance

There are 182 school days in a year.

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.

Lynch Hill will only authorise term-time leave in exceptional circumstances and only if requested in advance. 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 may 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.

Children missing in education

If the school becomes aware of a child who has been withdrawn from Lynch Hill with no new school to attend the school will immediately notify the attendance team at 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 potentially 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 being treated they should be in school.
- 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 9.10am
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 before the register closes (at 9.10am) are marked as late (L) and pupils arriving late after the registers close 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.

Cause for Concern

If your child's attendance falls below 95%, they will become a Cause for Concern.

1. The child's attendance will be monitored weekly by the Attendance Co-ordinators at the school, who will notify the parent of our concerns.
2. The parent may be invited into school to discuss the attendance issues.
4. They may be review attendance meetings for parents, child and school representatives.
5. Possible legal action if there is no improvement.

Attendance Co-ordinators

Our Attendance co-ordinators monitor the registers every week. Senior teaching staff also support the co-ordinators with attendance matters.

Inclusion Officer

The Inclusion Officer is available to work in partnership with families to help the family ensure their child is as successful as possible. She 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 Family Support Advisor, the attendance co-ordinators, 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 celebrated through an Attendance Party. The children will receive an invitation to attend the party if their attendance is at least 95% (which is usually no more than three days off a term) and they are late no more than 3 times in a term.

If the child is unsuccessful, but the parent feels that they had a genuine reason for being absent, the school will invite the parent to speak with a member of staff to review the situation. Once the Attendance Party has occurred, we can no longer consider the request.

Lynch Hill has a graduated response in managing non-attendance to school, this includes:

- In the first instance of absence, a text message to alert the parents of the absence and request a reason for it. If the parent fails to inform the school of a legitimate reason for absence, it will be unauthorised and they may be called in for an informal meeting.
- If a pupil's attendance causes concern, we will send home a letter registering our concern.
- Any further deterioration of attendance we will respond by inviting parents/carers to discuss the non-attendance to school.
- If there is no improvement, then we refer to the Attendance Officer at the local authority to begin the process for a fixed penalty notice (FPN). This referral can lead to 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 Co-ordinator.

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 before 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 school office 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 at 8.40 am. The register is sent to the office by 9am. Children who arrive after this time need to report to the office and sign in the "Late Book".
- Any lateness after 9.10am 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