

# LONDON MEED PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.
- Inform how the school encourages and enables good attendance
- Detail how the school monitors and reviews attendance, punctuality and lateness.
- Advise how the school deals with authorised and unauthorised absences
- Inform parents about Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

### Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that our school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

Parents/Carers and the school staff need to work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that our school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

### Why attendance and punctuality matters

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a children achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

### Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

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### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact the school **daily** to notify of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

### **We expect that the school will:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality
- When a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence reasonable steps will be taken by school staff that include:  
  
Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notifications and for emergency purposes, letters home (including recorded delivery), contact with other schools where siblings may be registered, possible home visits, enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts and enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family
- Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Annually inform parents of the % attendance of pupils
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly
- Monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- May notify the Local Education Authority (LEA) after 15 days sickness
- May notify Pupil Entitlement after 10 days unexplained absence.

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### Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For pupils the school doors are open from 8.35am until 8.45am. Children may go straight to class. There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil
- Registration takes place at 8.45am and pupils who arrive after that time will be recorded as late to school. The morning registers close at 9.10am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1pm and the register will close at 1.25pm
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through the Data Manager and the Head teacher and maybe referred to WSCC Pupil Entitlement.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

### Pupil Leaving During the School Day

The DFE recognises the importance of regular attendance and it is a requirement for the Head teacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Head teacher.

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where all pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time
- Parents are requested to **confirm in writing in advance**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.*

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### Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance, in writing and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action. Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised" this may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Head teacher and Governors have determined that:

- In **exceptional circumstances** permission may be granted for a holiday, providing a letter from the parents employer is received explaining that holiday may not be taken during school holiday periods.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Head teacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

#### Examples

##### Authorised Absences

- \*genuine illness of the pupil;
- \*hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the pupil;
- \* major religious observances
- \*visits to prospective new schools
- \*external exams or educational assessments.

##### Unauthorised Absences

- \*shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;
- \*a birthday treat;
- \*oversleeping due to a late night;
- \*looking after other children / other family member;
- \*appointments for other family members.

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### Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may be issued when a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

### Penalty Notices for Holidays

In accordance with guidance from West Sussex County Council, holidays during SATS and other external exam periods will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued. In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Head teacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more day's holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance
- Penalty notices are issued to **each** parent, for each child.

### Failure to ensure regular school attendance

The Data Manager, Head teacher and Deputy Head teacher at London Meed C.P School conduct regular attendance reviews each half term. Any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be contacted. If there is no improvement in school attendance London Meed C.P School will refer to WSCC Pupil Entitlement who work in partnership with school and parents in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

WSCC Pupil Entitlement may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Childs regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform London Meed C.P School as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received in writing:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate.



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The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Pupil Entitlement.



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## Appendix One

### **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

#### **Term-time holiday**

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow Head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a **family holiday** during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Head teachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.