

LARKS HILL

JUNIOR & INFANT

SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

School Governance Committee Approval Date	
Effective Date	1 st September 2016
Planned Review Date	1 st September 2017
Web Access	Internet
Owner	Head teacher

Larks Hill J & I School Model Attendance Policy

We believe that in order for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important that parents ensure this. This Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Aims

There is a direct correlation between Attendance and Attainment. The aim of the Attendance Policy is to raise levels of attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

“They’re only a few minutes late every day, why are school going on about it?”		
Arriving 10 Minutes late every day	Means they miss 32 hours of lesson time each year	Which is equivalent to 6 whole school days lost out of class per year
“It’s only one day, they’re there for the rest of the time. “		
Just 1 day off/absent every week	Means 2 months of lost education	That’s 7.5 weeks, or a whole half term of missed lessons

Objectives

- To reduce absence and lateness, and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Include all school staff, parents, pupils and Governors in attendance.
- Work effectively with parents/carers and partner agencies, using a range of strategies to improve the attendance on an individual and whole school basis.

The Law

Section 444 of the Education Act states that, if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence and that parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's school attendance. Failure can lead to legal action being taken by the LA in the Magistrates court, or the need to issue Penalty Notices. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A) where a parent knowingly allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence.

The difference between Regular and Good Attendance – Isle of Wight Vs Platt 2016

Following the above court case, the law currently sees 'regular attendance' as being at 90% or above. However this is not 'good attendance'. Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% are deemed in law to be persistent absentees. A school week is 10 sessions/5days: so in reality any child whose attendance is at 90% has, in the average school year of 380 sessions/190 days, missed 19 days of education. This equates to just under 4 weeks of education missed (3 weeks 4 days): this is an unsatisfactory level of attendance. The Pontefract Academies Trust and this school see good attendance as being 96% or above, meeting the national average. This equates to only missing 15 sessions/7.5 days over the whole academic year.

Parents can help us by:

- Ensuring that your children attend regularly and are on time.
- Telling us the reason for any absence and when the child will return (if known), on the first morning of any absence. (Preferably before 8:30 a.m.).
- Not keeping your child away from the school for trivial reasons. Accept your obligations contained in the Home-School Agreement you received when your child joined school (see Appendix 2).
- Where possible, arranging medical or dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Keeping the school updated (by telephone or letter) if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

As a school we take measures to safeguard our learners by:

- Following up any unreported absences after registration, with a text on the first morning followed by a phone call if we receive no response to the text.
- If we are unable to contact a parent/carer, we will visit the homes of pupils who are regularly absent and whose attendance is below 90%. This will occur before 11:30 a.m. where possible.
- Notifying the relevant Social/Case Worker if a child subject to a Child Protection Plan or at Level 4 Intervention is absent without explanation.
- Acknowledging and rewarding good attendance.
- Reporting regularly to parents about their child's attendance.
- Letting parents know if we have any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- If we continue to have concerns about a child's attendance we will work alongside the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) to help the child and, if relevant, their family, overcome any difficulties.

Authorised Absences

We recognise that whilst all children should aspire to 100% attendance, there may be occasions when a child cannot attend school. Authorised absences include the following:

- Illness or injury.
- Medical or dental appointment (if unable to make out of school hours).
- Family bereavement.
- Religious observance.
- Exceptional Circumstances – as decided by the Head Teacher.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absence might include:

- Waiting at home for a delivery.
- Going for a family day out.
- Sleeping in after a late night.
- Going shopping, or for a haircut.
- Celebrating a birthday.
- Parental/Carer illness (minor).

Penalty Notices/Holidays in term time

The Education Welfare Service is responsible for the administration and issue of Penalty Notices for schools within Wakefield.

Penalty Notices may be requested by the school when a child has been absent for 10 sessions or more, in accordance with Wakefield Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Currently, any Penalty Notice issued in relation to school attendance is £60 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. An unpaid Penalty Notice will be withdrawn by the EWS and a parental prosecution brought in its place, before the Magistrates Court under S444 of the 1996 Education Act.

The Head Teacher cannot grant any leave of absence for term time holiday absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Pupils have an entitlement to an education, not a term time holiday.

Holidays in term time - Isle of Wight vs Platt 2016

The High Court case of The Isle of Wight vs Platt on 13th May 2016 ruled that 'regular attendance' as required by Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 is deemed to be at or above the 90% threshold for persistent absenteeism. A Penalty Notice will be issued if a child's overall attendance falls below 90% whether due to irregular attendance and/or due to a term time holiday.

All holidays remain unauthorised and will be subject to a PN if a child's attendance is below 90% for the previous three consecutive academic terms prior to the date of the holiday.

School would emphasise that the above definition of regular attendance bears no relation to what we see as being good attendance which we see as being at the national average of 96% or above. (Please see page 2 of this policy for clarification).

(Please see Appendix 1 - 'Holidays in Term time Flow Chart').

Medical and dental appointments

Parents/Carers should book routine/non-urgent medical or dental appointments outside school hours, or during holidays to avoid their child's education being disrupted.

- If your child is referred for a non-urgent medical appointment at hospital, where possible please request as late an afternoon appointment as possible so that they lose as little lesson time as is possible.
- Parents/Carers should ensure that when a child attends a medical or dental appointment they are only absent for the duration of the appointment and do not keep them at home for the whole day.
- School will only authorise absences for non-urgent medical or dental appointments providing that a doctor or dentist's letter, appointment slip or card clearly stating the appointment date and time is brought in to school (a copy is acceptable).

Diarrhoea and vomiting illness

Where children have diarrhoea and / or vomiting then school will adhere to the advice of the Government's Health Protection Agency and request that children are kept away from school for 48hrs after the **last** episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

This is because if there is a bacterial or viral cause for the illness, the children can still be infectious for the first, usually 24 to 48 hours and 48 hours post recovery.

Punctuality

- Registration is at 8.55am so your child needs to be on the playground by 8.45am.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes in class are used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- If a child is late to school after the close of registration at 9.10am (*enter relevant time*), they will receive a mark that shows them to be at school, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- Lateness is monitored and where children are persistently late their parents/carers will be invited into school for a formal meeting to discuss this.

The Education Welfare Officer(EWO)

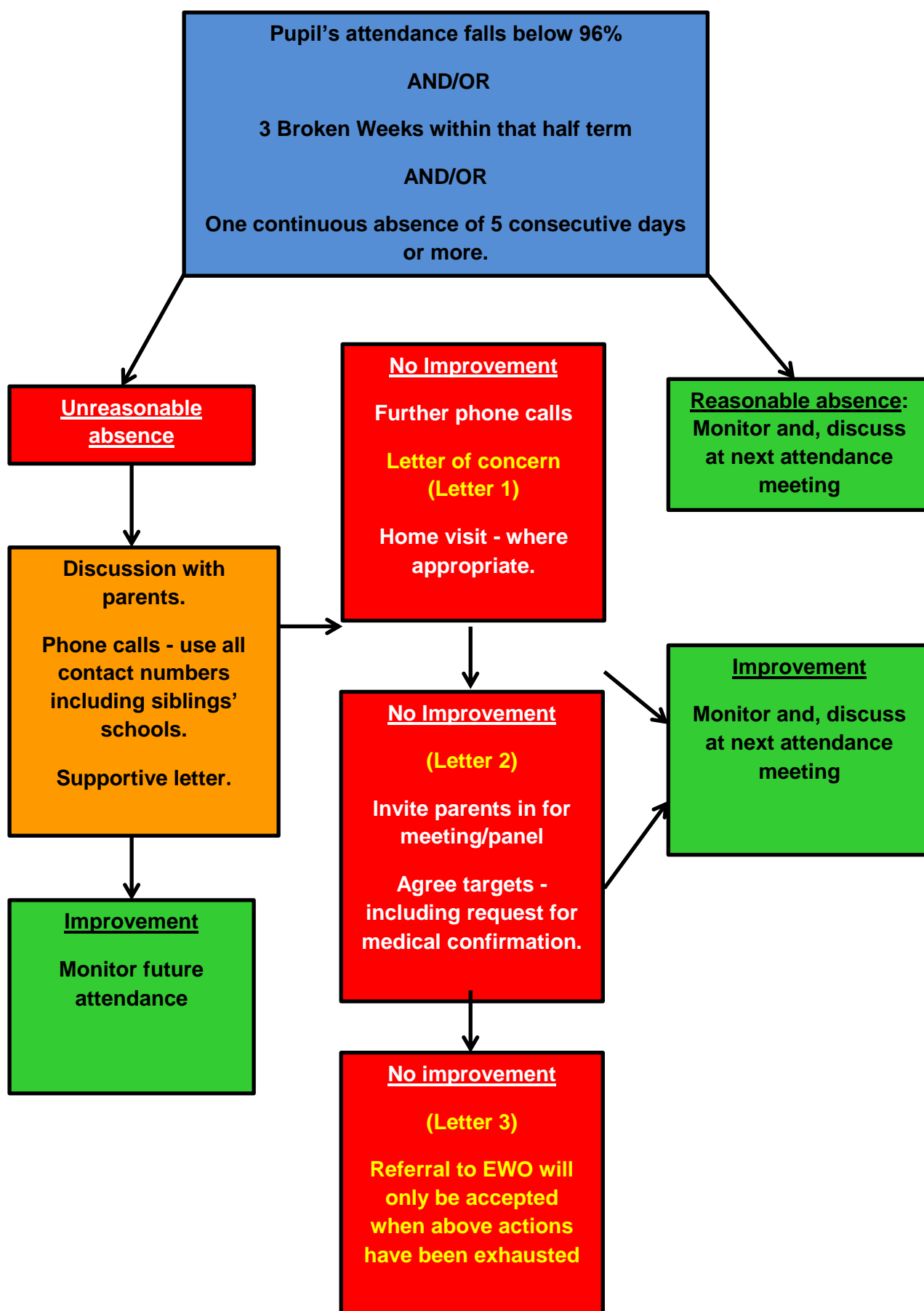
Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the LA Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, Education Welfare Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or parental prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer themselves to ask for help or information. EWOs are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Education Welfare Service (EWS) / Local Authority (LA)

- The EWS will work in partnership with the school to promote and facilitate improved attendance, at an individual level through a referral system or using the Fast Track to Attendance Programme, and at whole school level using proactive strategies and Action Plans.
- The EWS will work with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained.
- EWS will provide advice and guidance with regards to children missing Education. Child Employment and Licensing.
- EWS will work in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.
- EWS will undertake legal action on behalf of the school.
- The LA will support the school with networking and training events and with individual School Audits and Action Plans.

Appendix 1: Holidays in Term Time Flow Chart



Are there exceptional circumstances?

Yes

Have I applied in advance?

Yes

Head teacher *may* authorise absence

Are there exceptional circumstances?

No

Have I applied in advance?

Yes

Is my child's attendance equal to, or greater than 90% for three the three previous consecutive academic terms prior to the holiday?

Yes
Absence will be unauthorised but, parents will not receive a Penalty Notice

No
Absence will be unauthorised and both parents will receive a Penalty Notice for each absent child

Appendix 2: Home School Agreement

HOMework

As a school we believe that a sensible programme of homework activities for children in Key Stage 1 should be designed to take, on average, about 1 hour a week. At Key Stage 2 the demands should gradually increase so that by Years 5 and 6 children are spending about 30 minutes a day (two and a half hours a week) on homework.

The following identifies three types of homework your child will experience as they progress through school.

Daily:	The expectation is that Reading is part of a regular routine "little and often"; as well as spelling practice.
Weekly:	Normally English / Maths (sometimes revision or tests)
Occasional:	Other school based topic work

We believe this framework provides continuity and progression, particularly reflecting the increasing demands of upper Key Stage Two and helping to prepare children for the responsibilities of homework on transfer to High School.

The daily reading which the school recommends for all children can, of course, be done as part of homework. On days when the homework activity is something other than reading, children should be encouraged, in addition, to read on their own or with others - for at least 20 minutes (less for infants).

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Home - School - Child - Agreement

Pupil's Name:

We believe that pupils, staff and parents are partners in education. Everyone should be valued for who they are and for the contribution they make. Pupils should be given every opportunity to develop their full potential in all aspects of School Life, with appropriate support wherever specific needs are identified. We hope that all pupils will leave Larks Hill as confident, courteous and caring young people. They should have qualities of self-discipline, responsibility and independence that will enable them to work individually and co-operatively, and to make the most of secondary education.



T E A M

Together Everyone Achieves More

You may expect us as a school to:

- Encourage children to do their individual best at all times.
- Create a safe and pleasant environment, and encourage children to take care of their surroundings and others around them;
- Present a broad and balanced curriculum which offers appropriate challenges and promotes independence of thought;
- Treat all children fairly, and apply rules and sanctions clearly and consistently, ensuring no discrimination occurs based on race, gender or disability;
- Set and monitor homework in line with Government recommendations (see last page);
- Be available to discuss children's progress with parents at Consultation Meetings, and by arrangement when needed;
- Inform parents about matters of mutual interest through regular Newsletters and Bulletins (via Parentmail).

Signed Alison R Smith On behalf of School

As a pupil at Larks Hill, I shall do my best to:

- Be polite, helpful and co-operate with others.
- Do all my classwork and homework as well as I can.
- Take good care of the equipment and the building.
- Walk inside the building.
- Talk quietly.
- Be calm and understanding when I disagree with others;
- Keep my hands and feet to myself;

Pupil's name or signature

As Parent/Carers, I/we shall do our best to:

- Support our child in all opportunities for learning;
- Encourage our child to complete and return homework on time (signed by us);
- Support the School's policy for Behaviour and Health & Safety;
- Let school know about any concerns or problems which might affect our child's work or behaviour;
- Attend Consultation Meetings to discuss our child's progress.
- Make sure our child arrives at school by 8.55am for a prompt 9.00am start;
- Inform school of our child's absence before 9.30am;
- Encourage regular attendance;
- Ensure that our child wears the Larks Hill school uniform and adheres to the schools dress code;
- Ensure that holidays are not taken in term time as these will be unauthorised and will incur fixed penalty notices.

Please use the space below to make any additional comments which you feel are appropriate.

Parents/Carer's signature

Together we shall:

Support children's learning and help them achieve their best in all aspects of School life.