

Attendance Policy for Years 7 to 11

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1. General statement of aims:

- Lawnswood School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximizes opportunities for each student to realise their true potential. Good attendance leads to high attainment.
- All school staff will work with students and their families to help ensure that parents perform their legal duty in ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Responsibility for attendance is shared by all school staff in their various roles, pastoral or otherwise.
- Lawnswood School will encourage attendance by providing a welcoming, caring environment, wherein each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- Lawnswood School will maintain an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the success and efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- To meet these objectives, Lawnswood School will act early to address patterns of absence maintaining an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The governing body appoints a link governor who meets regularly with the Deputy Headteacher who oversees attendance.

3.2 The headteacher / deputy headteacher

The headteacher / deputy headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance improvement officer

The school attendance improvement officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the deputy headteacher
- Works with year managers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the deputy headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 The year manager

The year manager is responsible for:

- Overseeing attendance in their year group
- Attend daily attendance meetings to discuss absence in their year group
- Works with the attendance improvement officer to identify patterns of absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Sends communication to families regarding attendance
- Liaise with form tutors regarding attendance in their form
- Supports individual students to improve attendance

3.5 Form Tutor

Form tutors are responsible for monitoring attendance in their form, recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and when required contacting home.

3.6 Subject Teacher

The attendance of every lesson in school is recorded by a subject teacher at the start of each lesson on SIMS using the appropriate code.

3.7 Attendance Admin

Attendance administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They are also responsible for first day phone calls.

3.8 Parents

At Lawnswood we expect parents/carers to:

- Encourage their children to attend school daily and be punctual and inform the school immediately if their child is absent or unavoidably late
- Inform the school (via phone call or planner) in advance of any hospital appointment unavoidably scheduled during school time
- Inform the school of any problems which might affect their child's attendance
- Cooperate with the school if their child's attendance/punctuality is unsatisfactory
- Make requests for special leave of absence for their child during term time by completing an Application for Leave in Exceptional Circumstances form which is available on the school's website or from Student Reception.

3.9 Students

At Lawnswood we expect that students will:

- Always attend school unless prevented by a specified illness or unavoidable circumstances
- Always arrive to school and lessons on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix I for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 10 years after the date the student leaves school.

KS 3 students must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day, and KS4 students by 8.40am. The register for the first session for KS3 students will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.15am, whilst the register for KS4 students will be taken at 8.45am and kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.15pm and will be kept open until 12.45pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

If students are ill, parents must phone school the school attendance line on 01132844033 to explain their child's absence on day one, including the reason for absence and expected date of return. All illnesses should be specified. It is not sufficient to report a child as 'ill': the nature of the illness must be given in order for the absence to be approved by the school.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Students should bring evidence of the appointment to their form tutor.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using a code L
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using a code U.

The code U is an absence and our usual absence procedures will be followed. Students who are persistently late will be expected to catch up work after school with their year team. Parents will be notified.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting home on the first day of absence
- Conduct a home visit on day 3 if no contact has been made with the family
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents/carers along with the students report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable such as a death or funeral of an immediate family member or a housing crisis.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Where a student’s pattern of absence gives cause for concern we will contact the family to offer support in improving attendance. If a student’s absence does not improve then we will write to parents/carers notifying them of our concerns and we will invite them into school for a meeting.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

We have also adopted the Fast Track Process for fining non-attendance as set out by the Local Authority.

Schools will identify students who have 10 absences [5 days] within a 12 week period

- Schools will send a letter to parents
- Schools will monitor for 20 days
- If no improvement schools will invite parents to a meeting
- At the meeting schools will issue a penalty notice warning letter
- After the meeting schools will monitor for a further 20 days
- If no improvement shown schools can refer to the authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

6. Recognising Good Attendance

At Lawswood we recognise that good attendance leads to better outcomes. We will encourage students to attend school regularly by celebrating their attendance throughout the year in the form of certificates and rewards.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance improvement officer at our school monitors student absence on a daily basis.

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2) and notify an expected return date.

If a student's absence goes above 7 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

Where a student has been absent for 10 continuous days we will notify the Local Authority and where a student is absent for 20 school days we will refer to the Leeds City Council Child Missing in Education Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Relationship policy

9. Appendix I: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day