

Attendance Policy

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Written by	One Education



LILY LANE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Lily Lane Primary School believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Good attendance = Good results!

Lily Lane Primary School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families and pupils to identify the reasons for low & declining attendance and try to resolve any difficulties in a trauma-informed, inclusive manner.

Lily Lane Primary School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on admissions, anti-bullying, child protection, safeguarding and behaviour. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2. Legal Framework

Legal proceedings are a statutory intervention used by the local authority against the parents of registered pupils, who fail to attend regularly at school. Parents whose children are on a school register and fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child(ren), may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and the authority may take enforcement action through the courts to secure regular attendance.

Legal proceedings are not used as a punishment to parents for their pupil's absence from school; they are a supportive measure intended to make parents realise the importance of attendance and to avoid further absence from school.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A prosecution can take place against any person who has parental responsibility for the child's education or who has care of the child. Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children are properly educated. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. If you allow your child to be absent from school without good reason, the school will not authorise the absence, you may be committing an offence, and you could be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

This policy seeks to work in-line with Department for Education statutory guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance (2022) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018) and all other relevant guidance and legislation.

3. Safeguarding

Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family or the child's wider contexts. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding issue.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti-bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, FGM and CSE.

More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In order to allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least two other contact numbers in case of emergency.

It is also important for parents inform the school of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances.

4. Categorising absence

Where pupils are recorded as absent, the register will show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the headteacher or designated member of staff and cannot be authorised by parents/ carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Should no contact be received from the parent or the explanation is not satisfactory the absence will be unauthorised.

The appropriate code will be applied within 5 working days of the absence in-line with DFE statutory guidance (Working together to Improve Attendance 2022)

Absence will be categorised as follows:

I Code: Illness

Medical evidence shall be requested where the Headteacher or designated member of staff has genuine or reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the absence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, appointment text or prescription etc.

Pupils with long-term medical or health needs will be supported to access education by the school working in partnership with parents, pupils and when required, outside statutory and voluntary agencies including the Authority, School Nurse service etc.

M Code: Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day, wherever possible. Parents must show the appointment card or letter to school.

If a pupil attends for the registration period but leaves during the session for an appointment no absence will be recorded. The school will record the time the pupil leaves and when the child returns to school.

C Code: Leave of absence granted by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence. Leave will only be granted unless it has been applied for in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the headteacher believes the circumstances to be exceptional. Lily Lane Primary School will consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

Other circumstances where the C code would apply:

A child taking part in a performance where the child is subject to an employment license for specified dates, if dates have not been provided as part of the license, the Leave of absence will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

A temporary time limited part-time timetable for a child with a medical / health need as part of a reintegration support plan created in partnership with parents/ carers and pupils. This will be reviewed regularly with those involved. The code will not be used to manage pupil behaviour.

Code H: leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school

It is requested that parents/ carers make use of school holidays and should avoid taking children out of school unless this cannot be avoided. A written application must be made to the school for a leave of absence which will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

An application for leave of absence will not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is

granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

R Code: Religious Observance

Lily Lane Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. Lily Lane Primary School will authorise one day as set out by the religions organising national body, any further absences will be marked as unauthorised unless a written application for a leave of absence is received. If this additional leave is authorised by the Headteacher the C code will apply.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

T Code: Traveller Absence

Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers are all considered under the term Traveller.

This code will not be used for general absences by those groups. It will only be used when the pupil's parent(s)/ Carers are travelling for occupational purposes.

Lily Lane Primary School require a written request from the parents for a leave of absence (at least one month prior to taking the leave) marking this as 'traveller absence', also providing an expected date of return.

Where a pupil has no fixed abode because their parent(s) is engaged in a business or trade that requires them to travel, there is an expectation that the pupil attends at least 200 sessions per year. The pupil must attend school as regularly as the business permits and therefore, if the business or trade permits the pupil to attend for more than 200 sessions per year, they should do so.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

Late Arrival:

L Code: Late before the close of the Register:

Registration begins at 8:50am, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late.

U Code: Late after the close of the register

The register will close at 9:00am pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late after the close of the register unless a satisfactory reason can be provided i.e. medical appointment. The U code is an unauthorised absence for the school session (am/ pm).

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office with a responsible adult to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. Reasons for late arrival will be monitored (L & U codes) and continued late arrival will trigger supportive measures and interventions.

O Code: Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the headteacher. Where repeated unauthorised absences have been recorded the school may consider legal interventions.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

A pupil's/family member's birthday
Shopping for uniforms
Having their hair cut
Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
"Couldn't get up"
Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
Family holidays

5. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

Lily Lane Primary School will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Leave of Absence

It's is requested that parents/ carers make use of school holidays and should avoid taking children out of school unless this cannot be avoided. A written application must be made to the school for a leave of absence which will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

An application for leave of absence will not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of

absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate's court.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Lily Lane Primary School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Have high expectations and aspirations for all pupils under their care
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource

- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

All teaching staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Have high expectations and aspirations for all pupils under their care
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have high aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a written explanation.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Head Teacher.

7. Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

The Senior Leadership Team will receive a complete set of data every half term.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

Attendance and punctuality data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Lily Lane Primary School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 & General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR).

8. Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with school to identify the anxiety-based school avoidance resources most appropriate for support and to accept the support that is offered or advised.

Lily Lane Primary School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Anxiety-based attendance avoidance materials
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Early help referral options
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support

- Inclusion resources
- Reintegration support packages
- Referrals to supportive agencies and services

Support offered to families will be child centred, trauma-informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Lily Lane Primary School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

9. Legal Interventions

- Prosecution Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.
- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.
- A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of up to three months.
- Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.
- Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.
- The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.
- The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.
- Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.
- Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:
 - A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
 - A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence without reasons provided and/or accepted as exceptional by the headteacher/principal.
- A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.
- Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

- Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions

GREEN **pupils with attendance between 100% to 98%**

Good attendance will be celebrated with parents/ carers and pupils

- Pupils will be rewarded within the school's half termly attendance assembly.
- Pupils' names will go in a hat and a name will be picked out of hat. The child will receive a board game and the parent/carer will receive a £10 voucher. The same process and pupils will be rewarded who have improved their attendance.
- Pupils with this level of termly and annual attendance will receive a certificate of achievement.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

AMBER **pupils with attendance between 97% and 94%: PREVENTION**

Attendance will be monitored closely by Class Teachers

Class teacher will speak to the pupil to:

- Welcome the pupil back to school
- Confirm with the pupil the reason for absence and offer any support that may be required
- Update the pupil on other work they have missed and support any catch up required
- If appropriate, set an individual attendance target for the pupil using sessions rather than percentages that will see the pupil move to the band above
- Agree a review date

In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with the pupil, a letter will be sent to parents advising of concern and outlining the parents' responsibilities

Where improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve.
- Parenting Contract Completed
- Early Help Assessment offered and completed
- A statutory action warning has been discussed and formalised in a warning letter

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring letter will be sent.

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

AMBER-RED **pupils with attendance between 93%-91% - EARLY INTERVENTION**

Attendance lead will speak to the pupil to:

- Identify underlying home/school issues that may be causing the pupil's absence
- Review the pupil's academic progress and make links to the pupil's attendance e.g. If you attended all your classes you could achieve...
- Make arrangements for the pupil to catch up on work they have missed

- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil using sessions rather than percentages that will see the pupil move to the band above
- Agree a review date

In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with the pupil, a letter will be sent to parents advising of concern and outlining the parents' responsibilities

If improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve.
 - Parenting contract agreed
 - Penalty Notice 15 school day monitoring period commences
 - Agree a review date
- Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.
 - Where these interventions have already been implemented and have had unsatisfactory impact, the parent will be invited to an Attendance Panel where the possible outcomes will be:
 - Complete an early help assessment leading to multi agency support
 - Refer to the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings
 - Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without providing a satisfactory reason, a minimum of two home visits with the purpose to engage with the parent will be carried out prior to referral to the Local Authority.
 - A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

RED pupils with less than 90 % Persistently Absent or Severe Absence: TARGETTED SUPPORT

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are considered to be persistently absent from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, pupils will be grouped in to one of the following categories:

- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
- Special Educational Needs
- School age parents/expectant parents
- Long term non-attendance
- Parental support/needs e.g. parental drug use, young carers, domestic violence
- School issues e.g. bullying, poor teacher/pupil relationship, curriculum issues
- Offended or have an Anti-Social Behaviour Order
- English as an Additional Language
- Ethnic minority
- Mid-Year Admissions
- Gifted and Talented
- Other

Each grouping will have an identified member of staff who will:

- Ensure that the pupil has already spoken to a member of staff at the stages proceeding RED intervention (RED - AMBER intervention will occur in cases where the pupil has immediately fallen from GREEN into RED)
- Obtain records of previous contact and interventions as set out in RED/AMBER and escalate accordingly
- Ensure that weekly contact occurs with the pupil either individually or within a small group to address themed issues.
- Ensure that weekly contact with the parents to discuss any arising issues and to provide feedback on their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil that will see the pupil move to the band above.
- Review existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the pupil's attendance and any additional needs
- Be the key contact person for any external agency working with the pupil
- Input into whole school strategies to address the needs of pupils within their group
- Make a referral to Social Care should there be safeguarding concerns
- Make a referral to Manchester Statutory Attendance Team who will consider an Education Supervision Order, penalty notice or prosecution in the Magistrate's court.

Each identified member of staff will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and headteacher.

Attendance will be a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team meetings where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

The headteacher will report to the Chair of Governors/Governor for Attendance each half term and will report termly to the Governing Body.

Attendance following Covid 19

It is recognised accepted that children and families are taking time to adjust to a return to school and that there are additional considerations with regards to non-attendance given the impact that COVID-19 and the extended periods of absence from educational settings has had. As such, as a school, we are committed to ensuring that the following supportive steps are taken prior to exploring statutory action through the local authority:

- Parents will be offered an early help assessment.
- School will use the guidance from MCC on Anxiety Based School Avoidance Manchester Guidance document.
- Referrals to appropriate services such as CAMHS, Play therapist and Educational Psychologist.