

Introduction

Lower Fields Primary Academy recognises that good attendance is essential to raising standards and pupil attainment. Regular attendance also encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, work together as a whole team, share ideas and develop life skills. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Ensuring a child's attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence of the law and may result in prosecution.

Lower Fields Primary Academy will be proactive in tackling poor attendance. Our aim is to achieve and maintain a whole school target of at least 96% and to reduce persistent absence (below 90%) to less than 8%. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. We will work with parents and other agencies to improve attendance and therefore raise achievement for all our children.

Poor attendance can seriously affect a child's:-

- ❖ attainment in school
- ❖ relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- ❖ confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Promoting Regular Attendance

Everyone in our school community, pupils, parents and school staff, has a responsibility for promoting and maintaining excellent attendance. (See Appendix 1)

Lower Fields Primary Academy will:-

- ❖ Plan and engage children in enjoyable, interesting lessons which involve a good standard of teaching and learning
- ❖ Celebrate good and improving attendance
- ❖ Contact parents/carers on **each** day of absence where no reason has previously been given. Contact will be through text, phone call or unannounced home visit (where there has been no response to texts or phone calls)
- ❖ Monitor and track the attendance of all children on roll, analysing patterns and trends (whether they are of statutory school age or not)

- ❖ Speak with parents/carers where a child's attendance is causing a level of concern (whether they are of statutory school age or not) in order to work together and improve attendance. This may include agreeing an action plan to improve attendance.
- ❖ Make home visits where there are general safeguarding concerns, queries about a persistently absent child or just to confirm that a child is too unwell to attend.
- ❖ Contact the police or Children's Social Care to request a welfare visit where there is an immediate safeguarding concern.
- ❖ Liaise with other agencies, such as Children's Social Care, police, health visitors, school nursing team, LA attendance team (Education Safeguarding) and LA admission team regarding attendance and safeguarding concerns.
- ❖ Provide evidence to Bradford Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices where required.

We expect parents/carers to:-

- ❖ Ensure that their child attends school every day that they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Children should be brought to school with minor illnesses.* If you are unsure, you should bring your child to school and if they deteriorate and are seriously unwell, we will call you to collect them.

*Children **MUST NOT** be brought to school if they:
> are showing coronavirus symptoms,
> have tested positive for coronavirus,
> are required to quarantine following travel abroad
- ❖ Encourage a healthy lifestyle for their child so they are less likely to become ill.
- ❖ Contact the school **before 9.00am** on **each** day of absence, informing them of the reason for absence.
- ❖ Arrange all medical and dental appointments outside school hours, with the exception of emergency or consultant appointments. Provide a letter or appointment card as evidence of the appointment. Non-urgent appointments made in school time will be unauthorised. Children should not be taken out of school due to appointments for parents/carers.
- ❖ Depending on the time of the appointment, bring the child to school prior to, or return the child to school after.
- ❖ Provide school with evidence of appointments (through appointment cards or texts or emails or letters stating the type, date and time).
- ❖ Speak with school staff to discuss their child's attendance when required.

Persistent absence

Children who attend school for less than 90% of the time are known nationally as persistently absent pupils. Where a child becomes persistently absent (attendance is 90% or below), then we can issue proceedings to support an improvement in attendance. This can include meetings and supportive strategies or we can issue warning letters or fines.

Where children's attendance is below 95% and at risk of dropping below 90%, then school will implement supportive strategies to help parents/carers prevent this.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Where children do not attend school and parents/carers cannot be contacted, school will make enquiries through phone calls, home visits, other family members or known close friends to establish where the child is living. If no further information is provided the academy will refer the family to the CME team.

Holidays in Term Time

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to have time off during term time to go on holiday. Lower Fields Primary Academy does not authorise any holiday during term time for any reason or length of time.

Currently, due to COVID 19, parents/carers must consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel during school holidays as this must not prevent children returning to school on the first day of term.

- If a parent/carer does request a holiday, they must meet with the Principal or other member of the Leadership Team **prior to the holiday being booked**. The class teacher may also attend. They will explain clearly that the absence will be unauthorised and that they are in danger of losing their child/ren's place at school or being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the holiday extends over twenty school days, a child will be taken off roll. A CME Referral, (Child Missing Education) will be made to the Local Authority.
- Parents/carers will receive written confirmation that the holiday is unauthorised prior to the absence when possible.
- During the meeting, verbal confirmation of the absence being unauthorised will always be given prior to the absence and recorded on the Holiday in Term Time form.

- Written confirmation will be sent to confirm that the holiday has not been authorised and that a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.
- A letter will also be sent after the child has returned to school to explain the next steps of the fining process.
- The Principal will also meet with the parents/carers post-holiday to discuss with them how the absence has affected their child's attendance percentage and learning. Class teachers may also be present for this meeting.

Following guidance from Bradford Local Authority, parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (£60 per child, per parent/carer). Further information can be found here:

<https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/absence-in-term-time>

Religious Observance

The school may allow one day of authorised absence for religious observance per occasion. This is at the Principal's discretion.

Punctuality

Regular lateness is not acceptable. At Lower Fields Primary Academy the start of a school day includes mental maths or phonics practise during registration time.

Children who arrive late miss this important practise time, disrupt lessons which have already begun and can be embarrassed, which may lead to further absence.

- ❖ We will speak with parents/carers where a child's punctuality is causing a level of concern (whether they are of statutory school age or not) in order to work together and improve punctuality. This may include agreeing an action plan to improve punctuality.

At Lower Fields Primary Academy:-

- Children should arrive at their entrance door just before the agreed start time
- *Registers are taken at 8.55am* and late marks are recorded for any children who are not in the classroom by this time. Any children arriving after this time must enter through the Main Office entrance.
- *Registers are closed at 9.30am* and any children arriving after this time will receive a mark which shows them to be on site but does not count towards their attendance percentage.
- *A text message will be sent* to the parents/carers of any children who are not in school and for whom no reason for absence is known.
- *Phone calls will be made* to the parents/carers of any children who have not responded to the text message.
- *Unannounced home visits are made* to the homes of any children where no reason for absence is known and school have been unable to contact parents/carers.
- Home visits will also be made where there are safeguarding concerns, queries about a persistently absent child or just to confirm that a child is too unwell to attend.

LFPA Attendance Policy 2021.22

- Punctuality is monitored and tracked alongside attendance. We will meet with the parents/carers of children whose punctuality is causing concern.
- If parents/carers are having problems getting their children to school or getting them to school on time, then we expect them to contact school in order to try and resolve any issues.

x 1: Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Academy Associate Body	Monitor overall attendance. Monitor consistent use and review of attendance policy. Ensure that attendance data is collected, analysed and improves over time.
Principal	Provide attendance data and information to the Academy Associate Body. Consider requests for authorised absence or holiday during term time. Give approval in advance if appropriate. Authorise absence where satisfactory reasons are given. Ensure attendance and other relevant policies (e.g. bullying/ behaviour) are followed and issues/incidents are resolved. Consider the use of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or punctuality and make referrals. Complete the HT witness statements on pupil absence for court use.
Inclusion Leader (Attendance Lead)	Maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Monitor attendance and punctuality half termly alongside BCL. Investigate reasons for absence, exploring any underlying cause either at home or school. Liaise with staff, parents, pupils and other agencies regarding any attendance issues when required. Liaise with BCL and make referrals as necessary. Make referrals to other agencies where appropriate. Analyse trends in attendance and punctuality data to identify appropriate action. Provide attendance reports and other data when requested. Report to the Principal and Academy Associate Body regarding attendance and punctuality as required.
Parental and Community Involvement Officer	Maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Support BCL in making calls or home visits to parents where required. Work with BCL, class teachers, parents and children to improve poor attendance and/or punctuality. Investigate reasons for absence, exploring any underlying cause either at home or school. Liaise with staff, parents, pupils and other agencies regarding any attendance issues when required.
BCL Consultancy	Work closely with school and families to resolve attendance and punctuality issues. Make phone calls, home visits or meet with parents where required. Manage a cohort of PA children, working with staff and parents to remove any barriers which may cause poor attendance. Visit school for meetings and other events at agreed times. Where attendance and punctuality are a concern, take the appropriate action.
Clerical Staff	Record attendance data daily using agreed codes. Collect absence notes and record reasons for absences. Record late arrival and reasons. Send texts and make phone calls to parents from the first day of absence when no reason has previously been given. Notify BCL where there has been no reason given for absence. Prepare standard letters regarding attendance and punctuality when required. Provide attendance reports and other data when requested.
Class Teachers	Maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Prepare and deliver stimulating and enjoyable learning for all children. Register pupils at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Return registers to the office promptly. Ensure all absence notes/verbal reasons are passed on to the office staff. Log any concerns regarding a child's attendance or punctuality on CPOMS and alert IL and PCIO. Report attendance and punctuality to parents/carers at consultation meetings and on annual report.
Parents	Ensure their child attends daily and on time. Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance or punctuality. Contact school on each day of absence to inform them of the reason. Provide written evidence of medical appointments confirming the reason for absence. Encourage a healthy lifestyle. Arrange all appointments outside of school hours where possible. Work with school to improve attendance when necessary.
Pupils	Cooperate with morning routines at home so they are ready to leave the house in time to arrive at school for 8.45am. Attend school whenever well enough to do so. Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absence (e.g. bullying). Pass notes between home and school where required.

Appendix 2: Routines and Procedures

Frequency	Individual/Group	Routine
Daily	Individual/Family	Text sent to parent/carer each day that the child is absent without prior notice. (Clerical staff)
Daily	Individual/Family	Phone call to parent/carer each day that there is no response to the text. (Clerical staff)
Daily	Individual/Family	Home visit each day that there is no reason for absence and no response to the text or phone calls. (BCL)
Daily	Individual/Family	DSL (RR) or DDSL (AH or DG) is informed by 10.30am if parent/carer of any children with a Child Protection Plan or who are LAC cannot be contacted. Followed up as appropriate. (RR/AH/DG)
Every Half Term	Individual/Family	Review of half termly attendance data for individuals, families, classes, other groups. (RR/BCL) Meetings with parents/carers to discuss poor attendance or punctuality and plan how it will be improved. Review impact of strategies and work done in the previous half term. (RR/BCL)
As necessary	Individual/Family	Applications for term time holidays forwarded to Principal/PCIO (AG/AH). Parents invited to meet with AG/AH to discuss application. AG makes decision about whether or not to agree the holiday and informs parents. If parents take the pupils on holiday during term time without permission a penalty notice may be served.

Appendix 3: Rewards

Frequency	Individual/Group	Reward
Every Week	Class	Attendance trophy and special activity for the class with the highest attendance that week. (Class Teacher)
Every Week	Individual	A sticker for all pupils in nursery and reception with 100% attendance for the week. (AH/Class Teacher)
Every Week	Individual	Attendance Trackers for all children under 94%. Small reward earned for 100% attendance for a week.
Every Week	Individual	Punctuality Trackers for all children with an average of one late (L) each week. Small reward earned for 100% punctuality for a week.
Annually	Individual	All children with above 98% attendance and excellent punctuality for the year receive a special reward which may involve a trip out of school or a special event in school.