



Leigh Academy  
**Cherry Orchard**

## Leigh Academy Cherry Orchard Attendance Policy

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### Revision Log

Date	Version Number	Brief Detail of change
January 2026	1.2	Update to school day and register timings

## **Introduction**

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils. Our expectation is that all children will attend at least 95% of the time, which allows for common childhood illnesses.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance as it links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Holidays during term time will not be authorised.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that are connected with this policy.

## **Aims**

- create a culture in which good or excellent attendance is accepted as the norm
- demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- have in place procedures in place to prevent absence.

## **Role of the Principal**

*The Principal will:*

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of - and comply with - this policy
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning

- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy
- promote the importance of attendance
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and via dojo messages
- organise training if required for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy

### **Role of the School Admin Staff**

*The office personnel are responsible for:*

- implementing this policy with the Principal
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis
- keeping the Principal informed of attendance figures and trends
- contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance
- organising meetings between the SLT and parents to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- forward to the Principal any applications for a term time holiday
- compiling attendance data reports for the Principal, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Service
- meet half termly with the Trust Attendance Officer (TAO) to conduct monitoring of school attendance
- ensuring registers are kept up to date

### **Role of the First Day Contact Supervisor**

*The First Day Contact Supervisor is responsible for:*

- contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9.00 am
- continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made
- contacting the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence
- if no contact made, alert the Local Authority Attendance Advisory Service and/or Trust Attendance Officer to make a possible home visit or assess the situation
- deploying members of staff to visit vulnerable children on their first day of absence if there is a cause for concern
- deploying members of staff to collect a vulnerable child from home if a parent is unable to bring their child to school
- informing the SLT of trends in absence

## Role of School Personnel

*School personnel will:*

- comply with and implement this policy
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance
- ensure that registers are taken by 9:00 / 1:15 pm and are accurate and up to date
- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with pupils and parents
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations
- a member of SLT to be present on the playground each morning to greet parents and welcome children into school

## Role of Parents

*Parents are responsible for:*

- complying with this policy;
- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance
- informing the school on the first day of absence with the reason before 9:00 am on the school absence line on 01322 242011
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details
- informing the school if circumstances change - that may impact on their child's attendance - so that appropriate support can be given
- collecting their children on time
- not taking holidays during term time

## Registers

At Leigh Academy Cherry Orchard, the gates open at 08:40 am for all year groups. Our registers currently open at 8:40 and close at 8:55 am in the morning and again at 1:00 pm and close by 1:15 pm in the afternoon. Pupils who arrive between 8:55 and 9:15 am will be recorded as late to school (L code). Pupils who arrive after 9:15 am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

## Dealing with low attendance

*When poor attendance is identified the following actions are taken:*

- a [Letter of Concern or L1](#) will be sent when a child's attendance drops below 90% - the government's definition of persistent absence
- parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the attendance team
- support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence, e.g. breakfast club or other alternative entry arrangements
- offer 'meet and greets' for vulnerable students or other provision as required
- If persistent absence (PA) continues, a request for [Evidence request letter or L2](#) will be sent

- If absence does not improve and PA continues,, a letter is sent on behalf of the Trust Attendance Officer - [TAO meeting letter or L3](#)
- Where persistent absence reaches the threshold we will apply to Kent to issue a fine

### Keeping parents informed of attendance / absence

- Parents can view their child's attendance and absence on MCaS at any time
- An [Attendance Awareness letter](#) similar to this will be sent out each term to highlight current attendance and missed learning days

### Dealing with lateness

*The office personnel monitor lateness and will:*

- ensure that children arriving after 8:55 am are recorded as late in the register
- inform the SLT of patterns of lateness;
- inform parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed
- support offered via Breakfast Club or alternative provision as necessary

### Absence

#### Persistent or severe absence

Children who are registered at a school but regularly fail to turn up are officially referred to as being '***persistently***' or '***severely***' ***absent***. The school day is split into two sessions – one session counts as a morning or afternoon spent in school. Pupils who have missed more than 10% of school sessions are considered ***persistently absent***, while children who have missed more than 50% per cent of school sessions are referred to as ***severely absent***.

### Illness

It is usually safe for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild illnesses, like a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should stay at home if they have a high temperature or 38c or above. Medicines prescribed by a doctor can be given in school, if parents complete a medical consent form available from the office.

**Holidays during term time** – family holidays during term time will not be authorised in line with Government guidelines. Whilst family holidays can be enriching and important activities, the school year is structured in such a way as to provide plenty of time for holidays outside of term time. Parents should write to the Principal, at least one calendar month prior to the holiday, explaining the reasons why they are taking their child out of school; the Principal will then respond in a timely manner.

### Families of children with SEND

We appreciate there can be additional considerations when planning a holiday for children with SEND, but the Government's response to this is that "***all children, including children with SEND, have a right to a full time education***" and that "***strong attendance is vitally important for all children's attainment, mental wellbeing and long-term development.***"

If the Holiday is taken, despite the warning letter, this will be marked unauthorised and may be subject to a penalty notice. No work will be set by the class teachers during this absence.

**Leave of absence during term time** - Leave of absence during term time will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. By unavoidable, it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Leave of absence should be requested in writing to the Principal, who will make the decision of acceptance or refusal.

If leave of absence is taken during term time, despite the warning letter, parents are called in for a meeting with the Attendance Lead and a member of SLT and the relevant year group work folder will be shared, to demonstrate the amount of work that will/has been missed. No work will be set by teachers and the leave will be marked on the register as an unauthorised absence.

### **Penalty Notices and procedures for unauthorised absences**

Where a parent of a child, of compulsory school age, fails to ensure the child attends regularly, a penalty notice can be applied for to the local authority. A penalty notice is an out of court settlement, which is intended to change entrenched behaviour without the need for prosecution.

The threshold is **10 sessions** (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a period of 10 weeks. Payments are made directly to the local authority and there is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Note: These changes came into effect from August 19th 2024.

### **Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences**

- The **first** penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of 28 days may result in a prosecution through the Magistrates Court.
- A **second** penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil will be charged at a flat rate of £160 per parent per child, if paid within 28 days.
- A **third** penalty note cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first.
- Where the national threshold is met for a third time within the three years, the local authority may consider prosecution.

**Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments** – parents are encouraged, wherever possible, to schedule these appointments outside of school time, in order not to disrupt their child's education.

When a child has had to attend a medical appointment within school hours and then returns to school, they will be marked as 'authorised late' on their return that day with a note detailing the medical appointment. This is to ensure that they are marked as 'present' in the event of a fire or other emergency evacuation. If the child does not return to school after their appointment this will remain 'M' for medical on the register.

It is important to note that medical or dental appointments taken during the school day still count towards the child's overall absence percentage.

### **Leavers and Children Missing in Education & Removing a Pupil from Roll**

The school has a responsibility to safeguard pupils from harm. This includes knowing and taking reasonable steps to check the destinations of leavers. If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to:

- give the school full information about their plans
- include the date of move
- their new address
- the name and start date of the new school
- reasons for moving

When pupils leave and parents have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact the parent, then the child is considered to be a **Child Missing in Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations to try to track and locate the child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

As per *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 - Section 9*, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from academy roll, due to continued serious absence. Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts, we will remove from roll. *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*.

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*.

## Education for Health Needs including Mental Health

This guidance relates to local authorities statutory duties under *section 19 of the Education Act 1996*. The section 19(1) duty states that local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable and (normally) full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not receive suitable education without such provision.

This means that where a child cannot attend school because of a physical or mental health need, and cannot access suitable full-time education, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable alternative provision.

Where possible, the child's health needs should be managed by the home school so that they can continue to be educated there with support, and without the need for the intervention of the local authority. However, as soon as it is clear that the home school can no longer support the child's health needs and provide suitable education, the school should speak to the local authority about putting alternative provision in place.

There is no absolute legal deadline by which local authorities must start to arrange education for children with additional health needs. However, as soon as it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 days or more because of their health needs, the local authority should arrange suitable alternative provision. The 15 days may be consecutive or over the course of a school year. Where full-time education would not be in a child's best interests for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, local authorities must arrange part-time education on whatever basis they consider to be in the child's best interests.

Statutory guidance sets out that local authorities should provide education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 school days or more during the school year, whether consecutive or cumulative. While the section 19 duty sits with the local authority, schools should work closely with them and any relevant medical professionals to ensure that children with health needs are fully supported at school, including putting in place individual healthcare (IHC) plans if appropriate. This may involve, for example, programmes of study that rely on a flexible approach which include agreed periods of remote education.

Local authorities should be aware that under the ***The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024***, a school can only remove the name of a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from its register in certain circumstances.

These include where:

- the pupil has been certified by a school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age



## *Addendum 1*

### **Important Information regarding off rolling students**

- We will only enter pupils on the admission register where we have received written confirmation that the person with control of the pupil's attendance has accepted the school place.
- Where the local authority has offered a place at the school but no written confirmation of acceptance has been received from the person with control of the pupil's attendance, we will write to the local authority requesting evidence in writing and will not enter the pupil onto the admission register until this has been received. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the offer of a place will be withdrawn and offered to another pupil in accordance with our Admissions Policy.
- We will enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name will be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before, or at the beginning of the first session on that day.
- Where a pupil does not attend on the agreed date, we will send a letter to the person with control of the pupil's attendance asking them to confirm in writing within 10 school days that they wish to take up the place. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the pupil's name will be removed from the admission register and the place offered to another pupil in accordance with the admission policy.